

REMARKS  
OF  
HENRY B. STANTON,  
IN  
THE REPRESENTATIVES' HALL,  
On the 23d and 24th of February, 1837,  
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF  
MASSACHUSETTS,  
TO WHOM WAS REFERRED  
SUNDRY MEMORIALS ON THE SUBJECT OF  
SLAVERY.

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Fifth Edition.

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1837.

# REMARKS, & c.

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THE Committee of the House of Representatives, on Slavery, consists of the following gentlemen :

Messrs. LEE of Templeton,  
RICHARDSON of Boston,  
EATON of Haverhill,  
THOMPSON of Charlestown,  
HUNTINGTON of Northampton,  
COLLINS of Chester,  
COOLEY of Hawley.  
NEWTON of Washington,  
GOODRICH of Roxbury,  
PERKINS of New Bedford,  
BARSTOW of Rochester,  
CROSBY of Brewster,  
COFFIN of Edgarton, and  
UPTON of Nantucket.

REPRESENTATIVES' HALL,  
THURSDAY AFTERNOON, Feb. 22, 1837. }

THE Committee of the House, to whom was referred memorials on the subject of slavery, assembled in the Representatives' Hall, at 3 o'clock, P. M.

GEORGE S. HILLARD, Esq., of Boston, then addressed the Committee, as Counsel, in aid of the prayer of the following memorial :

*To the Honorable the Senate and House  
of Representatives of Massachusetts :*

The undersigned, citizens of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have learned with astonishment and alarm, that the House of Representatives of the United States did, on the 18th of January last, adopt a resolution in the words following, to wit :

‘Resolved, That all petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions, or papers, relating in any way, or to any extent whatever, to the subject of slavery, or the abolition of slavery, shall, without being either printed or referred, be laid upon the table, and that no further action whatever shall be had thereon.’

Your memorialists, regarding said resolution as a virtual denial to the people of the right to petition for a redress of grievances, a violation of the spirit of the 1st Article of the Amendments to the Constitution of the United States—as an unwarrantable and daring assumption of authority, at war with the fundamental principles of our Republican government—utterly destructive of the rights of the minority—a gross insult to the sovereignty of the entire people—and dangerous to the union of the States : do, therefore, respectfully and earnestly request your honorable bodies **TO PROTEST**, without delay, in the name of **THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMONWEALTH**, against said resolution,—and to invoke the House of Representatives of the United States, to **IMMEDIATELY RESCIND IT**. And your memorialists further ask, that a copy of said protest and invocation may be sent to each of the Senators and Representatives of this Commonwealth in Congress, to be by them laid before that body.

Mr. Hillard having concluded, Mr. HENRY B. STANTON then addressed the committee, in substance, as follows :—

*Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Committee :—*

My name is attached to one of the memorials on your table. While I appear before you to urge the prayer of the petitioners, I come not as a political partisan. I am not a politician. Nor as a moral partisan. I represent no party in morals. Nor as an ‘abolitionist.’ I appear before you as a citizen of this Commonwealth, yielding to none other in attachment to its prosperity and peace. But the highest character in which I stand before you to day, is that of a subject of God’s moral government. I **AM A MAN** : and I address myself to **MEN**. From

the character of this Committee, I am persuaded that the prayer of these memorialists will receive a respectful and a patient consideration. If I am asked whether these petitioners are abolitionists, I can only conjecture. Many of them I know are not. Probably many of them are. Of their character, I may speak more fully in another connection. Setting myself aside, suffice it to say for the present, they are of the bone and muscle of the Commonwealth:—the industrious, the intelligent, the patriotic, the moral. The men upon whose integrity, wisdom and firmness, the Commonwealth must rely in the hour of peril. Such men deserve a candid hearing. As to the number of the memorialists, it may be asked, have all, in the several towns who are friendly to the objects petitioned for, signed these memorials? I am instructed to say, that this is by no means the case. Various circumstances, prominent among which was lack of time, have conspired to render the number, both of memorials and memorialists, much less than it would otherwise have been.

The right of petition, the virtual denial of that right by Congress in its resolution of the 18th of January last, and the duty of this legislature to protest against said resolution, have been ably argued by the gentleman who has just sat down. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to the first *three* propositions in the following memorial.

*' To the Honorable the Senate and House  
of Representatives of Massachusetts :*

The undersigned, citizens of Massachusetts, respectfully pray your Honorable body :

1st. To declare that Congress has a Constitutional right to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

2d. To declare that this right ought to be exercised without delay.

3d. To invoke the Senators and Representatives of this Commonwealth, in Congress, to use their utmost exertions to procure the immediate abolition of slavery and the domestic slave trade within the limits of the District of Columbia.

4th. To *protest*, in the name of the People of this state, against the resolution passed by the House of Representatives of the U. States on the 18th of Jan., in reference to petitions on the subject of slavery.'

The plan I shall pursue, in this discussion, is the following:—

1. Inquire—Has Congress the Constitutional power to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia?

2. *Ought* Congress—i. e. is it expedient for Congress to exercise this power immediately?

3. Has Massachusetts any interest and responsibility in regard to these questions?—and if so, is it *such* an interest, and *such* a responsibility, that she ought to grant the prayer of the petitioners?

*First.*—Has Congress power to abolish slavery, and the slave trade, in the District of Columbia?

My excuse for discussing this branch of the inquiry, is—1. It is the hinge upon which all the questions of duty and expediency here at issue, turn. 2. The power of Congress to do this, is now extensively denied. Statesmen and politicians, not only at the South, but even at the North, are striving, by some process, to make themselves believe, against their better judgment, that, despite the plain provisions of the Constitution, Congress has no right to interfere with slavery in the District.

I boldly assume the position that Congress has this power.

1. Permit me to trouble the Committee with some *historical proof*.

*This power has always been admitted till recently.*

(1.) Hon. Joel B. Sutherland, in a speech on the floor of Congress, in April, 1836, said, ‘Such a right [right to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the District] had never been till recently denied.’\*

(2.) The American Quarterly Review, published at Philadelphia, said, about a year since—‘It would be hardly necessary to state this as a distinct proposition, [the power of Congress to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District,] had it not been *occasionally* questioned. The truth of the assertion, however, is too obvious to admit of argument, and we believe, has never been disputed by persons who are familiar with the Con-

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\* See Globe, May 9, 1836.

stitution.' The high reputation of this periodical, is well known to the Committee.

(3.) In January, 1802, the Grand Jury of Alexandria, in the District, asked Congress for 'LEGISLATIVE REDRESS,' from the 'grievances' of the slave trade therein.

(4.) In March, 1816, the House of Representatives, on motion of Hon. John Randolph, of Va., 'Resolved, That a committee be appointed to inquire into the existence of an inhuman and illegal traffic of slaves, carried on in and through the District of Columbia, and to report whether any and what measures are necessary for *putting a stop to the same.*'

(5.) In March, 1827, eleven hundred citizens of the District petitioned Congress for the abolition of the slave trade, and the gradual abolition of slavery in the District.

(6.) In 1826, the political press in the District urged the recession of the District back to Maryland and Virginia, on the ground that Congress possessed the power to abolish slavery in the District, and might be induced to exercise it.\*

(7.) On the 12th December, 1827, a memorial was presented by Hon. Mr. Barney, of Maryland, on the subject of slavery in the District, and was laid on the table and ordered to be printed. Hon. *George McDuffie* objected to the printing, but expressly admitted the right of Congress 'to grant to the people of the District any measures, which they may deem necessary to free themselves from this deplorable evil.' †

(8.) In 1828, the Legislature of Pennsylvania, by an almost unanimous vote, adopted a resolution, requesting their Senators 'to procure, if practicable, the passage of a law to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.'

(9.) In January, 1829, the House of Representatives of the U. S., by a large majority, instructed the Committee on the District, 'to inquire into the expediency [not the *power*,] of providing by law for the gradual abo-

\* See Alexandria Gazette for 1826.

† See Clairbourne's address to the people of Mississippi, in the Globe of May, 1836.

lition of slavery in the District.' How nobly, Mr. Chairman, does this resolution contrast with those adopted by the House last session,—with the foggy and disgraceful report of Mr. Pinckney, with the unconstitutional resolution of the 18th of January last, and the insane conduct of the House under that resolution? Who will dare to deny, that in seven years, the cause of human freedom in this country, has fearfully retrograded? But to return to our proofs.

(10.) In January, 1829, the Assembly of New York adopted a resolution, instructing their Senators, and requesting their Representatives, 'to make every possible exertion, to effect the passage of a law, for the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia.'

(11.) December 12, 1831, Hon. Mr. Adams presented Abolition memorials in the House of Representatives, and they were referred to the Committee on the District, composed entirely of slaveholders. The Committee reported, that 'until the adjoining states act on the subject, it would be [NOT UNCONSTITUTIONAL, but] unwise and impolitic, if not unjust, for Congress to interfere, &c.'

(12.) Mr. Van Buren admits the power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District, in a letter, last year, to gentlemen in North Carolina.

(13.) Pinckney's celebrated Report is compelled to concede the power to Congress.

(14.) The Legislature of Vermont, at its late session, passed a resolution, declaring that Congress has this power.

(15.) Mr. May's resolutions, recently introduced into the Virginia Legislature, proposing certain amendments to the United States' Constitution, impliedly admit the same.

But, Sir, it cannot be necessary to multiply historical proofs, though I have more at hand. I have been thus wearisome in my details, that I might show: 1. That the great mass at the North, have conceded this right, as well as very many at the South. And now, if Congress does not possess this power, how came it to be almost univer-

sally conceded, from the adoption of the Constitution onward, nearly forty years? 2. That Abolitionists are not the only 'agitators' of this question:—but, that State Legislatures, Congress, and even the people of the District themselves, have been the leaders in this work.

#### THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARGUMENT.

*Second.* I now proceed to offer proof of a different character. In Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution, we find this clause. 'The Congress shall have power to exercise exclusive legislation, in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by session of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States.' In pursuance of this clause, Maryland and Virginia ceded the District of Columbia to the United States, and Congress accepted the same.

Virginia and Maryland claim no power over the District. Nor does any other state. The District has no legislature, and therefore it cannot abolish slavery there.

#### THE LEGISLATIVE POWER OF CONGRESS OVER THE DISTRICT.

Congress, then, is the only law-making power for the District. The question then is, *has it power to make a law abolishing slavery there?* All its power over the District, is derived from the Constitution; and it gives it 'exclusive legislation in *all cases whatsoever.*' Is the case of *slavery* excepted? No. Then of course it is included in the grant of power.

#### THE ONLY LIMIT TO ITS POWER.

But, it may be asked, is there no limit to the legislative power of Congress over the district? Certainly. There are some things, which no legislature in this country, can rightfully do. Such as, to pass *ex post facto* laws, laws sanctioning robbery, rape, murder, and all violations of fundamental morality. So Congress, in regard to the District, stands on the same ground with the law-making



power every where. It is limited by such and similar restraints, and *no further*. Congress, then, having exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, has power to do any thing, in that District, which the law-making power is competent to do any where. Therefore, if any State has power to abolish slavery within its own territory, Congress has this power in the District.

It may be objected that *states* may have this power ;—the people having granted it to them in their Constitutions. Answer. 1. True, all power resides in the people ;—and they may confer more or less on their rulers. In some states, their Constitutions curtail the legislative power, so that it is not competent to abolish slavery. This power, however, resides in *the people*, and they can so alter their Constitutions, as to give this power to their legislatures. In some states, they have done so ; proving, conclusively, that when not restricted, the law-making power is, intrinsically, competent to the abolition of slavery. But, 2. The authority of Congress over the District, is not curtailed, but extends to the outmost limit of power, with which a legislature may be invested by the people :—to wit, ‘ALL CASES WHATSOEVER.’

#### THE ONLY QUESTION AT ISSUE.

The whole gist of the question, then, is this :—*Is a legislature, or the law-making power over a given territory, competent to abolish slavery there, when that legislature possesses all the power which any legislature, under any circumstances, is competent to possess ?*

I answer, 1. Legislative power *has* done it in numerous instances, in this and other countries. I confine myself to this. In Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey, slavery has been abolished by their respective legislatures.\* Now, are all these abolitions

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\* In March, 1780, Pennsylvania passed ‘an act for the gradual abolition of slavery.’ In January, 1784, Connecticut passed a similar act. In the same year, Rhode Island did likewise. In March, 1799, New York did the same. In February, 1804, New Jersey passed a similar law.

It is not strictly true, that in any of these cases the slavery *then existing* was abolished, but only that *prospective* slavery was abolished :—i. e. all

null and void, because the law-making power is not competent to abolish slavery?

2. The same authority has abolished slavery in *its parts*. And if we select those various parts from the different states where the mutilations took place, and combine them, we shall discover that they constitute the essentials of slavery:—and thus, legislative authority having done it in all its *parts*, has done it in the *aggregate*, or *whole*. The ancient legislation of Massachusetts and Connecticut, establish this truth.\*

#### SLAVERY THE CREATURE OF LAW.

3. That the law-making power can *abolish* slavery, is plain from the fact that it has *created* slavery. Slavery is the creature of law. Legislatures have enacted laws, and these laws have made the system legal. Let them *repeal* these laws, and it is no longer legal;—in other words, is *abolished*. Law *creates* slavery. Can it not *annihilate* its own workmanship?

#### COMMON LAW VS. SLAVERY.

4. On the principles of the Common Law, slavery is every where null and void. Common law operates as an abolition act, whenever it comes in contact with slavery. By it, every slave is free.† Hence, *statute* law *sustains* slavery;—and does it by violating *common* law. Repeal these statutes, and the great fundamental principles, on which the common law is based, would batter down the walls of this American Bastile!

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children born of slave parents were declared free, some at birth, others at a certain age, &c. (See Stroud's "Sketch," from p. 129 to 145.) Yet this does not affect the argument. For these acts establish the fact, that legislative power is competent to the destruction of slavery. Besides, in New York, in March, 1817, *existing* slavery was *immediately* abolished by the Legislature. [Note to second edition.]

\* See Stroud, pp. 23, 24.

† See Hargrave's profound argument in the celebrated case of *Somerset*, 20 How. State Trials, 61. See 2 Salkeld's Rep. 666, *Smith vs. Brown & Cooper*; and same vs. *Gould*. C. J. Holt declares, that 'as soon as a negro comes into England, he becomes free. One cannot be a slave in England.' 'Man may be the owner, and therefore cannot be the subject of property.'

## SLAVERY SOMETIMES THE CREATURE OF USAGE.

It has been objected to this view of the subject, that in some states, slavery is not sustained by statutes, but merely by general usage, and custom: hence, it is not competent for the Legislature to annihilate it, because it did not create it.

To this I answer, 1. Then, in such states, the legislatures should not make *stealing* and *robbery* illegal, for they are customary and usual! 2. Is not the grand object of government, to secure to its subjects their natural rights? And have legislatures no power to prevent one half of their subjects, from making common plunder of the rights and immunities of the other half, merely because this high-handed robbery is customary and usual?

3. But this objection does not cast its shadow even upon the border ground of the question before us. Congress can abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, because it exists there now by act of Congress.

HOW CONGRESS GOT POSSESSION OF THE DISTRICT. THE  
CESSION.

Let us recur to history. On the 23d December, 1788, Maryland passed an act, to cede to Congress, 'any district in the state, not exceeding ten miles square, which the Congress may fix upon, and accept for the seat of government of the United States.'

On the 3d of December, 1789, Virginia did the same, in these words, 'And the same is hereby forever ceded to the Congress and Government of the United States, *in full and absolute right*, and EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION, as well of *soil* as of persons residing or to reside thereon, pursuant to the *tenor* and EFFECT of the eighth section of the first article of the Constitution.' Slavery then existed, in both these states.

## CONGRESS CREATED SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT.

On the 16th July, 1790, Congress accepted the cession,

and provided, that the existing laws of those states (slave code and all) should remain in force 'UNTIL *Congress shall otherwise provide.*' Thus Congress adopted the slave codes of Maryland and Virginia, as its own, for the government of the District, and under these laws, the slaves of that District are held. When Congress accepted the domain, and provided by law for the government of the District, then the laws of Maryland and Virginia over the ten miles square, ceased; and, had not Congress re-enacted their *slave* laws, every slave in the District would have been free! But Congress continued, yea, virtually, to all intents and purposes, *re-established* slavery there, and thus made us A SLAVEHOLDING NATION. Now, Mr. Chairman, the power to repeal this act of Congress by which the slave code was re-established, must exist *somewhere*. Where? Not in the Legislature of Maryland: nor in the Legislature of Virginia: nor in the District: but, IT RESIDES IN CONGRESS.

#### THE DRAWBACKS. THE PROVISOS.

But, it is asserted, that in all this reasoning, we forget the *terms* of the cession;—the *drawbacks* and the *provisos*:—and now, say gentlemen of the Pinckney school, if Congress should abolish slavery in the District, it would violate the conditions on which Maryland and Virginia ceded it to the United States!

Answer. Look to the acts of cession. (1.) In that of *Maryland*, there was no drawback or proviso. Hence, the objector must admit, that Congress has power to abolish slavery over *that* portion of the District! (2.) The act of Virginia had a proviso touching the 'soil,' viz:—'That nothing herein contained shall be construed to vest in the United States any right of property in the *soil*, or to affect the rights of individuals therein, otherwise than the same shall or may be transferred by such individuals to the United States.' What, Sir, can be plainer, than that this specification about the rights of individuals in the *soil*, was to define more accurately that clause of the act of cession—'FULL AND ABSOLUTE RIGHT!' And,

instead of the proviso concerning the *soil*, operating to *restrain* the action of Congress upon *slavery* and *other* subjects, it even more fully *authorizes* and *confirms* its action upon points where there is no limitation, than did the act itself! For, a specific exception, as to a *single* particular, only proclaims all *other* particulars *exempt* from the exception.

#### A QUESTION

(3.) If Maryland and Virginia did really design to limit the power of Congress over slavery in the District, why not add half a dozen words to these acts, and the thing is done? Why not, at least, throw out some hint, in that direction? But not a word!

(4.) That clause of the Constitution which defines the power of Congress over the District, was referred to both by Maryland and Virginia, in their acts of cession, and those acts declared to be in pursuance of it. Now, the question we have to settle is, *not* whether these acts of cession, in all their minutiae, *harmonized* or *conflicted* with that clause of the Constitution;—but, *what are the powers which that clause gives to Congress?* Those acts could neither give nor take away power from Congress. The Constitution either gives to Congress the power to abolish slavery in the District, or it withholds it;—and that question is to be determined by the terms of the *Constitution*, and not, I humbly apprehend, by the *legislation of Maryland and Virginia*. And the fact, that Congress accepted the cession, proves, that in their opinion, the terms of the acts, contained no limitation of the power of ‘exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever.’\*

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\* As there is much misapprehension, and no little ignorance, concerning these acts of cession, they are here inserted entire, notwithstanding their length. [Note to second edition.]

I. MARYLAND. ‘An act to cede to Congress a district of ten miles square in this state for the seat of the government of the United States.

*Be it enacted, by the general assembly of Maryland*, that the representatives of this state in the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, appointed to assemble at New York, on the first Wednesday of March next, be, and they are hereby authorized and required, on the behalf of this state, to cede to the Congress of the United States, any district

## UNJUST TO MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA. THEIR SUPPOSITIONS.

It has been gravely urged, that if Maryland and Virginia had supposed, that the Constitution gave Congress power to abolish slavery in the District, they never would have ceded it to the United States; hence for Congress to do so, would be unjust to those States.

in this state, not exceeding ten miles square, which the Congress may fix upon and accept for the seat of government of the United States.' Passed at the November session, 1783. See Laws of Maryland, Vol. 2, November session, 1783, chap. 46.

2. VIRGINIA. 'An act for the cession of ten miles square, or any lesser quantity of territory within this state, to the United States, in Congress assembled, for the permanent seat of the General Government.

Sect. 1. WHEREAS the equal and common benefits resulting from the administration of the general government will be best diffused, and its operation become more prompt and certain, by establishing such a situation for the seat of the said government, as will be most central and convenient to the citizens of the United States at large, having regard as well to population extent of territory, and a free navigation to the Atlantic ocean through the Chesapeake bay, as to the most direct and ready communication with our fellow-citizens in the western frontier; And *whereas* it appears to this Assembly, that a situation combining all the considerations and advantages before recited, may be had on the banks of the river Patowmack, above tide water, in a country rich and fertile in soil, healthy and salubrious in climate, and abounding in all the necessities and conveniences of life, where, in a location of ten miles square, if the wisdom of Congress shall so direct, the States of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, may participate in such location;

*Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly*, that a tract of country, not exceeding ten miles square, or any lesser quantity, to be located within the limits of this state, and in any part thereof as Congress may by law direct, shall be, and the same is hereby forever ceded and relinquished to the Congress and government of the United States, in full and absolute right, and exclusive jurisdiction as well of soil, as of persons, residing or to reside thereon, pursuant to the tenor and effect of the eighth section of the first article of the Constitution of the government of the United States:

Sect. 2. *Provided*, that nothing herein contained, shall be construed to vest in the United States any right of property in the soil, or to affect the rights of individuals therein, otherwise than the same shall or may be transferred by such individuals to the United States.

Sect. 3. *And provided also*, that the jurisdiction of the laws of this commonwealth, over the persons and property of individuals residing within the limits of the cession aforesaid, shall not cease or determine, until Congress, having accepted the said cession, shall by law provide for the government thereof, under their jurisdiction, in manner provided by the article of the Constitution before recited.'

Passed 3d December, 1789. See Virginia 'Statutes at large,' Vol. 13, chap. 32.

Answer. 1. They *did* cede it ;—Congress did accept it ;—and then the power of these States ceased, and the power of Congress commenced. The only question is, *What is the Constitutional power of Congress over the District*, and NOT what were the *suppositions* of Maryland and Virginia? They may have had divers *notions* about the subject. But, I am yet to learn, that their notions either alter, or abrogate, the clause in question ;—or, that these States, are the authorized interpreters of the Constitution of this republic.

2. These States had given in their sanction to the Constitution, *before* the cession. They knew such a clause existed ;—and that if they ceded territory to the United States, under that clause, Congress would possess all the power over the territory *after* the cession, which they possessed *before*. How then could they have supposed, that Congress had no power to abolish slavery in the District? Sir, it is the love of slavery, which *gives color to this idea*.

#### THE COMPACT ! A VIOLATION OF THE PUBLIC FAITH !

But, *the compact* ;—ay, Sir, THE COMPACT. We are told, the *South* would never have ratified the Constitution, if they had supposed it gave Congress this power ;—and hence, to exercise the power, would be a violation of the public faith. And it is asserted, that there was a general understanding to that effect, both at the North and the South. Sir, on this part of the subject, it requires all one's self-possession to keep cool. I assert that the *North* never would have ratified that Constitution if it had not fully understood, that by its terms, Congress did possess this power. So far was she from supposing, at the time of adopting the Constitution, that Congress had not this power, she most religiously believed, that that instrument inflicted a death blow upon slavery generally, and that the whole system would soon die. By its provisions, the foreign slave trade was to cease, after 1808. The prevailing opinion in Europe and in America at the time the Constitution was ratified, was, that if this

was destroyed, slavery itself must die. Judge Wilson, a member of the Convention which formed the Constitution, pronounced the Article granting to Congress the power to stop this trade, 'one of the loveliest of its features, diffusing beauty over its whole aspect. He considered this power, equivalent to authority bestowed on Congress, to *exterminate slavery*.' \*

#### MASSACHUSETTS' SUPPOSITIONS.

And, Sir, what were Massachusetts' 'suppositions' when she ratified this Constitution? In the debate upon the instrument, in her Convention, Maj. Gen. Heath, of the Revolutionary Army, said: 'Two questions naturally arose in his mind. If we ratify this Constitution shall we do any thing by that act, to hold men in slavery? Shall we become partakers in other men's sins? He thought not. Congress had gone as far as it could. Slavery was confined to the States *now existing*. It could not be extended. By their ordinance, Congress had declared that the New States should be *republican* States, and have no slavery.'† This, Sir, is Revolutionary testimony.

In the same Convention, Judges Dawes said, 'We are either to consider the blacks of the South as property, or

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\* It is asserted, that the *South* never would have ratified the Constitution, if she had *supposed* it gave Congress power to abolish slavery within the ten miles square. This *supposition*, it is contended, nullifies the plain provisions of that instrument! Let us array supposition against supposition, and then carry out this strange doctrine. Would the *North* ever have ratified that clause of the Constitution which gives to the *property* of the South a representation in Congress, if she had 'supposed,' that in 1837, there would be no less than twenty-five members, representing this property, on the floor of Congress?—and the number constantly increasing? At the time of ratifying the Constitution, the North had every reason to suppose that slavery was to have been abolished long ere this day. Instead of this, the slaves have increased to two and a half millions, and the South, mainly by means of her property representation, has carried every question in Congress against the North, for the last twenty-five years. Now, suppose the North should whine about *her* suppositions concerning the abolition of slavery, and, because they had not been realized, should insist that the clause of the Constitution which gives to the South a property representation, was null and void; would the South accord to it? To interpret the Constitution by the *suppositions* of its ratifiers, would involve us in the profound of absurdity and contradiction. [Note to 2d Edition.]

† Elliott's Debates.



freemen. Our own state laws, and our own Constitution, would lead us to regard these blacks as freemen, and so indeed would our ideas of natural justice.' Judge D. then referred to the article of the Constitution concerning the foreign slave trade, in terms of high eulogium. Said he, 'We may say, that although slavery is not smitten with an apoplexy, yet it has received a mortal wound, and will die of consumption.'\*

Truly, Sir, may not Massachusetts *now* exclaim, 'OUR FATHERS! WHERE ARE THEY?'

Judge Dana, and Hon. John Adams, members of the Convention, rejoiced over that provision of the Constitution which limited the slave trade,—'odious and abhorrent,' as they termed it.

Mr. Backus denounced slavery. He trusted it would die, as his friend Judge Dawes had said, of consumption. 'The gospel,' said he, 'has placed all men on a level. "Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men."'

Mr. Neal and Gen. Thompson opposed the clause which put off the preventing of the slave trade till 1808. Said Mr. N., 'I protest against any thing which shall favor the making merchandise of men.' Gen. T., in the course of a vehement speech, exclaimed, 'Mr. President, shall it be said, that after we have established our own independence and freedom, we make slaves of others? Washington! what a name he has! how has he immortalized himself! But, Sir, he still continues to hold those in slavery, who have as good a right to freedom as himself!'

Sir, these were the doctrines of this state in the olden time. This her understanding of the compact. Upon whom have the mantles of our fathers fallen?

#### WHAT WAS THE COMPACT?

Were there time, I would detail a long catalogue of facts, showing, that if there was any compact between the North and the South, besides the *written* compact, it

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\* Elliott's Debates.

was not a *PRO-slavery*, but an *ANTI-SLAVERY* compact. True to the pledge, the North returned from the Convention, and commenced the work of abolition. Numerous abolition societies were formed in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and even in Maryland and Virginia. And numerous addresses and sermons denouncing slavery, were put forth by the Pinckneys, the Jays, the Franklins, the Rushes, the Edwardses, the Hopkinses, and the Stileses of that day. Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson were not silent. And, by the great mass of the country, it was hoped, believed, and understood, that long, long ere this, the last vestige of slavery was to have rotted in a dishonored grave. Then, Sir, I go for the Compact!

#### CONGRESS CANNOT IMPAIR THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY.

It is further objected to abolition in the District, that Congress cannot justly impair the right of private property; and that slaves, being property, their emancipation, by law, would be unjust to the owner.

To this it may be replied, that Congress *does* not only *impair* the right of private property, but it *annihilates* it, so long as its own laws withhold from the slave his private property;—and such property too;—not merely his property in his earnings, but in himself!

Reference is frequently made to the 7th Article of the Amendments of the U. S. Constitution, which says, ‘nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation,’ as proving the injustice of abolition by Congress. But this clause manifestly refers to the taking of *individual* property for *governmental* uses. Nothing like this is done in the abolition of slavery.

#### CONGRESS CAN ESTABLISH JUSTICE.

In the Preamble to the United States Constitution, one of the reasons assigned for its formation is, ‘TO ESTABLISH JUSTICE.’ The emancipation of the slave, is not to wrest from any rightful owner his private property, but is

to establish justice between the slave and his master. It is giving to the slave what is '*just and equal*,'—his own body :—himself. It is saying that the slave's body and mind are his : and that HE *has a right to them*. When Congress abolishes slavery, it establishes justice between two men,—giving to the slave his own, and taking from the master what never, in justice, belonged to him. To give the slave personal ownership, is, however, far from full justice to him. That would demand of the master full compensation—not merely saying to him, 'rob the slave no longer, but pay him for past robberies.' And, indeed, has Congress no right to do this? What! a government no power to do justice between its subjects? No power to keep one portion from robbing another? Such a government is a mockery! a nullity!

#### PRIVATE PROPERTY IS SUBJECT TO LEGISLATION.

But, in the abolition of slavery, Congress would do nothing more in regard to private property, than is done in every legislature in the nation. Laws are made every where, regulating transactions between persons :—adjusting the relative claims of different classes ; employers and employed ; guardians and wards ; masters and apprentices ; the exercise of professions ; and the prosecution of trades. All such laws (and certainly they are no curiosity!) affect the rights and property of individuals ; and they are designed so to affect them as '*to establish justice*.' The repeal of the old law of entailments, and the enacting of the statute of limitations :—the regulation by law of the alienation of property, its transmission by descent, and by will, the saying who shall and who shall not be heirs, and how it shall be divided among them :—all these statutory provisions, most seriously affect the right of private property. And yet, who ever doubted the power of legislation to do such acts? And, Sir, SLAVERY has been abolished in New York, and other states by statute! This has never been considered as any violation of private property.

## CONGRESS HAS LURED THE OWNERS TO INVEST PROPERTY IN SLAVES.

A very plausible objection to this doctrine has been urged, which I will briefly notice, and then leave the question, as to the *power* of Congress to do this work. It is said, that the national legislature, has lured the slaveholders into the investment of property in slaves; has said to them, by its laws, 'go on and purchase, and we will protect you,' therefore, it would be great injustice in the same legislature, to destroy property thus invested.

I answer, 1. Slavery is rank injustice to *the slave*:—a cruel wrong. Has Congress no right to correct its own wrong?

2. The government and the slaveholder, should be regarded as common wrong doers;—shall I say, common robbers? Either one, or both, may repent, without DOING INJUSTICE.

## MAN CANNOT BE PROPERTY.

3. The National legislature has lured the slaveholder to invest property in MEN? Then, these holders must run the risk of such investment! Property in men! Talk of property in fixed stars, but not in immortal souls! Man's superior right to himself, over the claims of another, is self-evident. It stands pre-eminent among the essentials of his moral nature. His right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, is inalienable. Our Declaration of Independence utters it, and human consciousness, from its inner temple, responds Amen! Congress has lured the slaveholders to invest money in human souls! And, the poor deluded masters, they will sink their money if the victims of their rapacity are permitted to regain possession of their own souls! Impious whining! Sacrilegious fraud! It overlooks entirely the rights and the interests of the slave. Its sympathies all cluster around the pocket of the robber, rather than the heart of the robbed.

But, it is ridiculous, as well as impious. Speculators,

who invest their riches in human flesh, must look out that those riches don't take to themselves heels, and run away! Suppose your legislature should charter a stock company, which should issue scrip, payable by a tax on the sunshine which fell on Nantucket. Suppose gentlemen of property and standing, should invest large sums in this scrip, and should be flushed with the expectation of making large profits in this sunshine speculation. But lo! when they sent their collectors to that bustling island, the people should stoutly refuse to pay the tax;—insisting, that a Beneficent Providence sent his sunshine with an equally liberal hand upon all, whether evil or good. And, then, these speculators in sunshine—scrip, should whine around the doors of your legislature, that they had been lured into this investment, that it was hard, they had sunk money, and so forth. Would not common sense reply to them, that 'those who invest property in sunshine, must expect small gains?' Sir, it is much more clearly a self-evident proposition, that a man has an inalienable right to his own body, than that he has an inalienable right to the sunshine which falls upon that body.

The Committee then adjourned till the next day, at 3 P. M.

#### FRIDAY AFTERNOON, FEB. 24.

The Committee met in the Representatives' Hall, pursuant to adjournment. In continuation of his argument, Mr. STANTON addressed them, in substance, as follows:

I am aware, Mr. Chairman, that it is customary, on occasions like this, to commence by descanting upon the *importance* of the subject under discussion. This is common place. I dislike to stoop to it on the present occasion, lest my reasons for so doing should be regarded as trivial. Yet, I will run the hazard. In courts of justice, the advocate often trembles, as he rises to address the jury, when the pecuniary interests of his client are at stake: then what should be my feelings, when I rise to address you, not in behalf of the pecuniary interests of one client, but in behalf of the liberties and the lives, the interests, temporal and eternal, of thousands? Ay, more;—the

questions here discussed, are not confined in their bearings, to the slaves in the District of Columbia ; nor in this nation. The cause of freedom throughout the world ; the honor of God's law, will be deeply affected by your deliberations. The interests here involved, are co-extensive with human hopes and human happiness ; wide as the universe, lasting as eternity, high as heaven. Then, Sir, the slave, the master, this Commonwealth, the nation, the world, Jehovah himself, demand that we deliberate patiently, cautiously, impartially. And, gentlemen, your constituents will pardon you for so doing. No subject is more discussed by them, than that now before you ; and the intensity of their feelings, not less than their immediate concernment, requires this deliberation at your hands. The committees of the honorable body, whom you represent, spend many weeks in the investigation of Banks, Rail-roads, and kindred subjects, and shall you not devote a few brief hours to a matter, whose importance as immeasurably overshadows all pecuniary and fiscal interests, as liberty is more worth than money.

And I ask the indulgent attention of the Committee, because I believe, that as you shall decide, so the Legislature will act. Your number is unusually large ; you justly have the confidence of the House, and to you they look to mature this subject for their action. Upon you, therefore, rests the responsibility of a decision. Hear me then for my cause, and bear with me, because I plead not only for the suffering, but the dumb.

#### THE QUESTION STATED.

The question which will now occupy our attention, is the second one proposed yesterday, viz :—*Ought Congress immediately to abolish slavery, and the slave trade, in the District of Columbia?* The power of Congress to do this, was discussed yesterday. Our present business is with the expediency of exercising that power.

#### SLAVERY A POLITICAL AND MORAL WRONG.

1. I contend that Congress should immediately abolish slavery and the slave trade in that District, because slavery

is a system at war with natural justice and moral equity:—is a political and a moral wrong:—a sin against man and God. Hence, no political or moral considerations can justify its continuance for a moment. ‘Justice,’ says Gov. McDuffie, ‘is the highest expediency—and I am sure South Carolina is the last state in the Union, that would knowingly violate the sacred canon of political morality.’ Shall Massachusetts be behind South Carolina in political morality? Before I entered the House this afternoon, a friend remarked to me, that it would be of no use to urge the odious character of slavery to satisfy this Committee of the expediency of its immediate abolition. Sir, I will not believe it. Is it true, that the detestable and impious nature of slavery, is not, to the head and heart of a Massachusetts legislator, the highest reason for its immediate and total annihilation? Is the old Pilgrim spirit quenched within the legislative halls of this Commonwealth? God forbid.

#### SLAVERY MAKES MEN THINGS.

What then is slavery? It is the worst of all oppressions. It robs men of their distinctive characteristics as rational and immortal beings, and makes them things. In the language of the slaveholding code, (and slavery is the creature of law,) ‘Slaves are deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be chattels personal, in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever.’\* Thus, the master has as absolute ownership over his slave, as over any other property. The statute un-creates the slave as a man, and re-creates him a chattel.

#### IT DESTROYS ALL MAN’S RIGHTS. HOW?

It annihilates all his rights by annihilating his manhood, by virtue of which alone, he is an owner of rights. His Creator endowed him with sacred rights, pre-eminent

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\* Stroud’s “Sketch of the laws relating to slavery,” p. 23:—a work which every free man, and especially every legislator, should possess.

among which was the right of personal ownership. Having robbed him of this pre-eminent right, the law is consistent, when it says, 'a slave can do nothing, possess nothing, acquire nothing;'<sup>\*</sup> for, in the language of the same code, he 'is not to be ranked among sentient, rational beings, but among things, as an article of property.\* To rob men of *property* is manifestly unjust, and your Legislature would not hesitate a moment to declare it expedient to stop *such* robbery instantly;—but, to *rob men of themselves*:—ah, that is indeed a 'delicate question!' Slavery thrusts its robber-arm too far to excite the abhorrence of political morality. If it stopped at the pocket, the civilized world would cry out against it;—but, when it goes through the pocket to the man himself, and by force takes him, body and soul, and converts him into merchandise, and herds him with four-footed beasts and creeping things, then its abolition is a question of doubtful expediency! To steal your purse, Mr. Chairman, would be palpable injustice;—but to take yourself, and thus annihilate the sun in the solar system of your rights, around which all your other rights revolve, and upon which they depend, and without which they are not, is but a venial offence: and to rebuke it, much more to prevent it, is of questionable expediency!

Sir, slavery is the acme of injustice and impiety. God gave to man his faculties to be employed in the promotion of his own happiness. But slavery regards the slave not as a being possessing rights and susceptibilities of happiness, but as a mere means of happiness to his master. The object of the system is not to promote the good of the slave, but to use him to promote the good of another. He is not permitted to use his powers of body, of mind, of soul, to advance his own happiness, or the happiness of others, or to obey his God. Yea, the profit and the pleasure of the owner are the end for which the slave is permitted to exist! He only lives that he may be profitable to his master!

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<sup>\*</sup> Stroud, p. 22.



## MEN ANNIHILATED.

In the District of Columbia, there are seven thousand Americans, bearing Jehovah's image, and touched with His immortal fire, who are, by statutory enactments, absolutely annihilated as beings possessing rights and susceptibilities of happiness; are permitted to live only as appendages to the existence of others; as mere articles of convenience to be used for the pleasure of others; and, so far as it is in the power of human legislation to do it, are divested of every right, natural, social, intellectual, political and moral, and are crowded out of God's creation into the chaos of an anomalous existence, where they are regarded and treated neither as men, nor yet as things;—neither as rational beings, nor yet as brutes;—but as **SLAVES**.

## SOMEBODY RESPONSIBLE. WHO?

For this daring,—this impious crusade against Jehovah and His works, somebody is responsible. Who is it? **THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.** This system is its handy work. It lives, and moves and has its being in that District, by the express permission of Congress. Then let that body, let those who elect that body, and those who have influence with that body, take the responsibility of continuing this system of 'complicated villany;' but let them answer it to that Being, who has said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.'

## THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY THE SOURCE OF CRUELTY.

The right of absolute ownership over the slave as a chattel, is the fountain head, from which all the cruelties of the system flow. The innumerable inflictions, exactions and privations, such as stripes, toil, denial of wages, with all the other positive evils of the system, flow spontaneously from this source.

## SLAVES NO PROTECTION OF LAW.

Having robbed the slave of himself, and thus made him a thing, Congress is consistent in denying to him all pro-

tection of law as a man. His labor is coerced from him, by laws passed by Congress:—No bargain is made, no wages given. His provender and covering are at the will of his owner. His domestic and social rights, are as entirely disregarded, in the eye of the law, as if Deity had never instituted the endearing relations of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister. **THERE IS NOT THE SHADOW OF LEGAL PROTECTION FOR THE FAMILY STATE AMONG THE SLAVES OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.** What think you of this, Sir, as a husband and a father? Neither is there any real protection in law, for the limbs and the lives of the slaves of that District. The shadow of legal protection for life and limb, is indeed extended to them, but the substance is not there. No slave can be a party before a judicial tribunal, in the capital of this Republic, in any species of action against any person, no matter how atrocious may have been the injury received. He is not known to the law as a person;—much less, a person having civil rights. Says Judge Stroud, in his admirable ‘Sketch of the laws relating to slavery,’ “it is an inflexible and universal rule of slave law, that the testimony of a *colored* person, whether bond or free, cannot be received against a white person!!”\* Slavery thus puts the *life* of its victims into the power of the master. The master may murder by system, with complete legal impunity, if he perpetrates his deeds only in the presence of colored persons! What think you as a Legislator, sir, of such a system in the Capital of a land of light and law,—which boasts of equal rights, of trials by jury, of courts of justice, and whose Constitution says, “no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law?” Is it expedient to abolish it? And this system, in that District, is hereditary and perpetual.†

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\* Stroud, p. 27.

† For a full exhibition of the legal condition of the slave, see Stroud, p. 25, and onward.

## CIVIL GOVERNMENT A CURSE.

Thus Congress, in regard to one-fifth of those over whom it exercises exclusive legislation, has perverted civil law from a blessing into a curse; and, to its victims, has made our free institutions an engine of the most odious tyranny. It is the constitutional guardian of the rights, and the sworn protector of the interests, of *all* the people in that District. It has offered the rights of seven thousand citizens, a bleeding sacrifice on the altar of cupidity, passion and power. **IT IS RECREANT TO ITS HIGH TRUSTS.\***

## THE SLAVE TRADE IN THE DISTRICT.

But, sir, the *slave trade* in that District demands our attention. How humiliating, that the Capital of our nation should be one of the foulest slave markets in the world!

## MINER'S RESOLUTION.

In January, 1829, the House of Representatives of the United States, on motion of the Hon. Mr. Miner, of Pa. *adopted a resolution*, by a vote of 114 to 66, a part of whose preamble I will read.

"Slave dealers, gaining confidence from impunity, have made the seat of the federal government their head quarters for carrying on the domestic slave trade.

"The public prisons have been extensively used, (perverted from the purposes for which they were erected,) for carrying on the domestic slave trade.

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\* It will be perceived, that in my remarks upon the sin of slavery, I have scarcely alluded to its *incidental* cruelties :—its stripes, lacerations, starvations, coercions, robbery of wages, chains, murders :—nor, to the fact, that it hurls its victims to the depths of mental degradation, blots out the intellect, tramples down the upward aspirations of the spirit, breaks the heart, whelms hope in despair, and ruins the soul :—but, have dwelt chiefly upon the fundamental crime of the system,—*the holding and using man as property*; thus, *by using men as mere means to the attainment of ends*, disregarding and condemning the sacred and immutable distinction which God has instituted between rational beings and things. It is the transformation of Jehovah's image into merchandise, which constitutes the essential guilt of slavery. From this poisonous trunk, all the branches of this Bohon Upas spread out, laden with deadly fruit. [Note to 2d Edition.]

"Officers of the federal government have been employed, and derive emoluments from carrying on the domestic slave trade.

"Private and secret prisons exist in the District for carrying on the traffic in human beings.

"The trade is not confined to those who are slaves for life; but persons having a limited time to serve, are bought by the slave-dealers, and sent where redress is hopeless.

"Others are kidnapped and hurried away before they can be rescued.

"Instances of death, from the anguish of despair, exhibited in the District, mark the cruelty of this traffic.

"Instances of maiming and suicide, executed or attempted, have been exhibited, growing out of this traffic within the District.

"Scenes of human beings exposed at public vendue are exhibited here, permitted by the laws of the general government.

"A writer in a public print in the District has set forth, 'that to those who have never seen a spectacle of the kind (exhibited by the slave trade) no description can give an adequate idea of its horrors.'

#### THE PUBLIC PRISON:—A SLAVE DEPOT.

In a speech in support of his resolution, Mr. Miner makes the following statement in regard to the jail in Washington.

"By papers furnished me by the keeper, it appears that in the last five years, more than four hundred and fifty persons had been confined in the public prison of the city—a prison under the control of Congress, and regulated by its laws—for sale in the process of the slave trade. Such, said Mr. M., is not the intention for which the prison was erected. Pennsylvania, so far as she is concerned, and her means are appropriated to repair and keep up the prison, I am confident in saying, does not and never has intended that it should be used for this purpose."

Nearly three hundred others were, during the same period, taken up and imprisoned as *runaways* in the same jail.

#### CASH PAID FOR AMERICANS!

The following advertisement is cut from a recent Washington paper.

#### "CASH FOR 400 NEGROES."

"Including both sexes, from 12 to 25 years of age. Persons having likely servants to dispose of, will find it to their interest to give us a call, as we will give higher prices in cash than any other purchaser who is now, or may hereafter come into this market."

"FRANKLIN & ARMFIELD."

Franklin & Armfield are extensive dealers in human flesh, at the Capital. They have a regular line of "Packets," running from Alexandria to New Orleans, whose

chief business is the transportation of slaves. I present their case only as a *specimen* of the trade in the District. Ay, sir, there is a keen competition in this brokerage in human blood. Franklin & Armfield are but one of the many firms, who drive this trade at the seat of the Federal Government. See the audacity with which they offer "higher prices" "than any *other* purchaser in THIS MARKET!"

"PIRACY." WHAT IS IT?

Where do we witness this? On the coast of Africa? No! For *there*, if caught, Franklin & Armfield would be hung as pirates. But, in the Capital of "the freest nation on earth." And who are these "negroes?" Are they of the Caffres in Africa? No! For then, Franklin & Armfield would die as pirates. But, they are American born citizens! And, is the code of morals in barbarian Africa so much purer than in enlightened America, that what is piracy there, is legalized and sanctified here? Then, let us keep *our* missionaries at home, and beckon *hers* to our shores!

Mr. Miner, in the course of his remarks, read a presentment made by a grand jury at Alexandria, in 1802.

"January Term, 1802.

"We, the grand jury for the body of the county of Alexandria, in the District of Columbia, present as a grievance the practice of persons coming from distant parts of the United States into this District, for the purpose of purchasing slaves, where they exhibit to our view a scene of wretchedness and human degradation, disgraceful to our characters as citizens of a free government.

"Those dealers in the persons of our fellow men, collect within this District, from various parts, numbers of those victims of slavery, and lodge them in some place of confinement until they have completed their numbers. They are then turned out into our streets, and exposed to view, loaded with chains, as though they had committed some heinous offence against our laws. We consider it a *grievance*, that citizens from distant parts of the United States, should be permitted to come within the District, and pursue a traffic fraught with so much misery to a class of beings entitled to our protection, by the laws of justice and humanity; and that the interposition of civil authority cannot be had to prevent parents from being wrested from their offspring, and children from their parents, without respect to the ties of nature. We consider those grievances demanding legislative redress; especially the practice of making sale of black people, who are, by the will of their masters, designed to be free at the expiration of a term of years, who are sold and frequently taken to distant parts, where they have not the power

to avail themselves of that portion of liberty, which was designed for their enjoyment."

True it is, that this presentment was made thirty-five years ago. But, Mr. Chairman, as the trade has increased in years, it has grown in turpitude and horror. It has now become too strong and too respectable for the grand jury of that District to dare to present it as a grievance. There are too many members of Congress who profit by it now, to justify such an interference! Under the torpedo power of slavery, slaveholding grand juries are struck dumb. Shall the Legislatures of free States succumb? The Holy Alliance sneers at our tame subserviency.

#### FREEMEN SOLD UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CONGRESS!

This traffic is not confined to the legal slave:—it clutches the rights of the free. Says Mr. Miner, in the preamble to his resolution,

"Free persons of color coming into the District, are liable to arrest, imprisonment, and to be sold into slavery for life, for jail fees, if unable from ignorance, misfortune, or fraud, to prove their freedom."

By a law of the District, authorized of course by Congress, all negroes found residing in the city of Washington, who shall not be able to establish their title to freedom, are committed to jail as *absconding slaves*! Most wicked and unconstitutional law! It is the common law, even of Monarchies, that men are to be presumed innocent, and consequently free, till they are proved guilty. But by this law, *color* is made a crime, which first robs citizens of their constitutional rights, and is then taken as evidence that they are slaves:—and to crown all, a large posse of constables and other officers, some of them in the pay of the Government, are, by their oaths, obliged to execute these laws. The result is, that citizens, as free as your Committee, are often arrested, imprisoned, and then sold for their jail fees as slaves for life! Here is the record of our baseness. A Washington paper has the following

#### NOTICE.

"Was committed to the prison of Washington Co. D. C. on the 19th day of May, 1834, as a run-away, a Negro man who calls himself DAVID PECK.

He is 5 feet 8 inches high. Had on, when committed, a check shirt, linen pantaloons, and straw hat. *He says he is free*, and belongs to Baltimore. \*\* The owner or owners are hereby requested to come forward, prove him, and take him away, or ["or" what? said Mr. Stanton; *he will be set free?* We should naturally think so; remembering that he was an American citizen, in the Capital of "the freest Government on earth." But NO! Listen.] *or he will be sold for his prison and other expenses, as the LAW DIRECTS.*

JAMES WILLIAMS,

*Keeper of the Prison of Washington County, District of Columbia.*  
For ALEXANDER HUNTER, M. D. C."

The above is but a specimen. Four other persons, at least, who said they were free, have been advertised in a similar way within the last year. I will not comment on such facts. It would be insulting to the patriotism and humanity of the Committee. Shall the voice of this ancient Commonwealth be dumb, when slavery plays such tragedies of cruelty on the theatre of our Capital? If so,

Then, by our Fathers' ashes,  
Has the spirit of the true hearted and the unshackled gone!

The time may yet come, perhaps has already past, when a legal voter of our own State, may visit Washington, on business before our National Legislature,—and from the color of his skin, be suspected of having been robbed of personal ownership, and on such suspicion be plunged into prison, and, in due time, be sold to pay "his prison and other expenses, as the law directs." Sir, let us talk no more of "State Rights," till we have acquired courage to protest against such unconstitutional aggressions.

#### LICENSE TO SELL MEN.

In the City Laws, sanctioned by Congress, I find an "Act to provide a revenue for the Canal Fund," which lays an impost as follows, "*For a License to trade or traffic in Slaves for profit, whether as Agent or otherwise, FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS.*" That the lust of power, and the love of gain, should so corrode the human heart, that man should traffic in the sinews of his brother, is the wonder of fiends:—but, that a Republican Congress, which has branded the slave-trade on the coast of Africa, as piracy, should license it in the city of Washington, must excite their indignant contempt. Says Dr. Samuel

Johnson, "*the loudest yelps for liberty are among the drivers of slaves.*" The conduct of the American Congress, establishes his character as an eminent lexicographer, and an admirable definer of terms.

Sir, I will not expatiate upon the turpitude and horror of this traffic. The record of its cruelty is written in tears and blood. In savage atrocity, it yields not to the African slave-trade. In gathering its victims from the surrounding country, the tenderest ties of nature are cut, with a ferocity which might fire the hardest negro stealer on the coast of Congo, with generous indignation. Chained in coffles, like criminals, or herded together like beasts, these unfortunate beings are driven to the Capital by the remorseless man-trader. Arrived there, they are thrust into damp and dark cellars and filthy prisons. Thence, are taken to the auctioneer's stand, and amid the jeers and insults of the crowd, are sold in lots to Republicans and Christians. Then comes the separation of families, with its attendant suffering; and the purchased men, women, and children are hurried off to their various destinations. To be appreciated, the agony must be felt:—it cannot be described. In all that should excite the sympathy of the humane, the indignation of the generous, or the abhorrence of the virtuous, the American man-market may challenge the world for a competitor. And, around these purlieus of Hell, a Legislative body, the majority of whose members are the Representatives of freemen, throws the shield of its protection and approval!

#### WHAT DO THE PETITIONERS ASK?

And now, Mr. Chairman, what do the petitioners ask you to request Congress to do? Merely to repeal these odious statutes immediately, and to enact others, if necessary, in their stead.

#### IMMEDIATE ABOLITION:—WHAT IS IT?

By immediate abolition, they do not intend that the Slaves of the District should be "turned loose:"—nor,



that they should be, as a *sine qua non* to abolition, immediately invested with all political rights, such as the elective franchise. But, simply, that Congress should immediately restore to every slave, the ownership of his own body, mind and soul, and should no longer permit them to be "deemed, held, and sold, as chattels personal, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever." That they should no longer be regarded as things without rights, but as men with rights. In a word, that the right of property, on the part of the master over the slave, should instantly cease. This being done, of course the slave should be legally protected in life and limb,—in his earnings, his family and social relations, and his conscience. We only ask, that the master should stop taking from the slave those things which of right belong to him:—and that Congress should give equal and exact justice to all concerned. Sir, is this just? Is it expedient?

#### LEGAL PROTECTION ANNIHILATES SLAVERY.

To give impartial legal protection in that District, to all its inhabitants, would annihilate slavery. And is not *innocence* entitled to the protection of law? Slavery and the slave trade, could not survive the introduction, into that District, of this plain principle, viz. that *innocence is entitled to the protection of law*; a principle so self-evidently just, so necessary to the existence of human society in its most degraded forms, that even semi-barbarians acknowledge and act upon it. Give the slave, then, equal legal protection with his master, and, at its first approach, slavery and the slave trade flee in panic, as does darkness before the full-orbed sun. I still press the point: is it expedient for all the inhabitants in our Capital, to have the protection of law? or shall the rights of the weaker, be made the common plunder of the stronger?

#### ENFRANCHISEMENT.

As to the immediate investment of the slaves with the elective franchise, and other mere conventional rights, we leave that to the wisdom of Congress. We only say, let

there be no tests on account of *color*. Strike a dead level, and whose head soever reaches above it, let him enjoy the advantage, whatever may be his phrenological conformation. Let the quality of the brains, and the color of the heart, be the standard, rather than the color of the skin, and the texture of the hair.

#### PAUPERISM AND THROAT-CUTTING.

I am asked, if the slaves would not become paupers, and vagrants,—or might not kill their masters? I answer; that same power which repealed the slave code, would make all necessary provisions to prevent pauperism and vagrancy, and to secure the general welfare. The entire resources of the country would be at the disposal of Congress; and, at any moment, it could bury the emancipated negroes of the District, under an avalanche of cannon balls.\*

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\* It is a stereotyped objection to emancipation, that the negroes, if set free, would become paupers. The following facts are in point.

In *Philadelphia*, the colored population amount to about 20,000 :—and are in proportion to the whites, as 1 to 9. *The large majority of this population, have been slaves, or are the immediate descendants of slaves.*

In 1830, the whole number of out-of-door paupers, statedly relieved in the city, was 549 :—but, only 22 of these, or about 4 per cent., were people of color. Of the paupers admitted into the almshouse, the proportion was nearly the same.

In the same year, the payments by the colored people of the city, to poor funds, was..... \$2500  
The expenditure for colored poor, in the same year, was..... \$2000

Balance..... \$500!!

Thus, so far from being unable to take care of their own poor, the people of color, besides doing this, pay \$500 per year, to support white paupers!! These facts were fully confirmed to the writer of this note, by the late Judge Vaux of Philadelphia. Let them nail this slander to the counter.

From careful inquiry and observation among the 3000 people of color in *Cincinnati*, nearly all of whom have been slaves, the same general facts appear. They not only have abundantly supported themselves since they were free, but earned and paid their masters, for their freedom, about \$250,000!!!

The following, recently appeared in the *Pittsburgh Daily Advocate*, concerning the colored population of that city. Probably, the majority of these people have been slaves.

"It has been matter of surprise and gratification, to those who have observed the deportment of the colored population of this city, that there existed among them so much good order, and almost an entire freedom from

## SLAVES BETTER OFF NOW THAN IF FREE.

A member of your Committee, Mr. Chairman, has asked me to answer the inquiry, whether the negroes of the District would be as well off when free, as they now are while slaves.

Mark, sir, the kind of abolition for which I contend: to wit, the restoration to the slave of personal ownership, and the protection of law. Then the inquiry resolves itself into this,—whether the slaves would be as well off to be men, as God made them, as to be things, as He did not make them. In a word, whether it will conduce to the happiness of the world, to regard things and beings just as they are, or just as they are not. Men better off without compensation for their labor, than with? Then repeal your laws for the protection of private property, and the collection of debts. Men better off without legal protection than with? Then burn your statute books, abolish your judiciary, and raze your legislative halls to their foundation, and cry havoc, and let slip theft and robbery, assault and murder. Men happier without the ownership of their own minds than with? Happier that their *wills* should be under the absolute control of another, than that they should control them themselves? Impossible: for it is equivalent to saying, that a man is better pleased to do as another pleases, than to do as he himself pleases.

## SLAVES ARE NEVER WELL OFF.

But, sir, with all respect for the honorable member, his inquiry assumes what I totally deny:—to wit, that a *SLAVE can be WELL OFF*. He may be fed well, clothed well, not severely whipped, nor over-worked. But this is regarding man as a mere *animal*. *Horses* may be fed well, covered well, not over-whipped, nor worked: and may be

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the beastly practice of intoxication, which we too frequently see exhibited in our streets, by people of our own race. Their conduct, so far as observed in this city, is fifty per cent., in the aggregate, more virtuous than is the conduct of the same number of whites, in the same grade of occupation and society." [Note to 2d Edition.]

*held and used as chattels:* and not contravene any law of their nature. But man has a nobler nature. His spirit soars upward. He was created "a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor, and *set over the works of God's hands.*" Is it treating such a being well, to take him from this high station, in close fellowship with angels, and tarnish his glory and his honor, and wrest from him his sceptre as a lord of creation, by transforming him into merchandise, and driving him like a brute, and selling him in the shambles to the highest bidder? Said the immortal Henry, "give me liberty, or give me death!" and this nation responds to the sentiment a loud Amen! Is it good treatment to inflict on men that which is worse than murder? There is more in slavery than the deprivation of bread, and the infliction of stripes. Its ploughshare of ruin goes over the soul. Said an emancipated slave to me in Cincinnati, Ohio, "I had rather be a free man, and live under the cruel laws of Ohio, and beg my bread from door to door, and go down to the Ohio river to drink, than to be a slave in Virginia, where I could not own myself, and where I heard the cries of my poor perishing brethren." As you love freedom, listen to a slave! Show me the man who now eats plain and scanty food, wears coarse clothing, and works hard and long, but walks erect in the dignity of freedom, who would exchange such a life, for one of luxury, splendid dress, and fashionable ease, on the condition that he was to be the absolute and perpetual property of another, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever. I would like to look that man in the face!

Better off in slavery? We ask Congress to give them impartial justice. This, Congress can do, and is bound to do. And would not this be better than abject slavery?

I have no time to glance at facts. Read the entire history of emancipation; and this fact challenges contradiction, viz. that the condition of the emancipated negro, physically, socially, intellectually, morally, is decidedly superior to his condition while a slave. St.

Domingo and the British West Indies, settle this beyond dispute.\*

#### FREEDOM OUTLAWED AT THE CAPITAL.

2. I assert that Congress ought immediately to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, because it is the Capital of this Republic; our National Legislature, and Supreme Court; the public offices, and the public records are there; and [*now, sir, for the inference,*] the existence of slavery there, is totally incompatible with that freedom of locomotion, of speech, of the press, and of debate, which are necessary to transact the public business of the nation.

It is needless to say, that every citizen should be able in safety to visit the Capital of the Republic, whatever may be his opinions on any subject. But, while slavery exists there, this is impossible.

\* A volume of conclusive testimony might be adduced to establish this position. I challenge the bitterest opponent of abolition, to point out a single fact in the history of West India Emancipation, which militates against it. I select the following fact from a mass, because it is recent, and comes from a disinterested source. Antigua is one of the islands which discarded the apprenticeship system, and adopted immediate abolition.

Extract of a letter from an American gentleman making the tour of the West Indies, dated St. Johns, Dec. 29, 1836.

"I have been in this island for two weeks, including the Christmas holidays. I have conversed with men of all persuasions, politics, &c.; I have visited several estates, and talked with the managers. The testimony from every quarter is uniform on this point; that immediate emancipation has been a great blessing both to the planters and the laborers, but chiefly to the former. The testimony is uniform also in favor of emancipation above apprenticeship.

The Christmas holidays are just passed. On the one hand there has been no parade of the military, and on the other there has been no appearance of riot or drunkenness. It has been a season of religious meetings among the negroes. There were meetings on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, at all of which the negroes attended in great numbers.—I can safely say, I never spent as peaceful and quiet a Christmas in America. In this respect there has been a wonderful change here. Formerly the Christmas holidays were an occasion of fiddling, dancing, carousing, drunkenness, street riots, &c. &c. I am gratified beyond measure with the aspect of things in Antigua. Religion, morality, temperance, and education are marching forward with the rapidity of magic. In a word, I can say that Antigua is a beautiful specimen of the fruits of immediate emancipation. I wish every American could visit it."—*N. Y. Evening Post*. [Note to 2d Edition.]

Free colored citizens, I have already shown, are outlawed in the District. If one of them should invent a useful improvement in mechanics, and should go to Washington to obtain a patent, he might be seized, incarcerated on the suspicion that he was a slave, and finally he, and his model, both be sold at auction, to *defray the expenses of suspecting him!*

#### DR. CRANDALL'S CASE.

Those of a paler hue fare but little better. In the Summer of 1835, Dr. Reuben Crandall, a citizen of New York, visited the District for the purpose of pursuing his profession. Being suspected of holding sentiments in accordance with the Bill of Rights of this Commonwealth, he found refuge from the vengeance of a howling mob, within the walls of the public prison. I personally know this gentleman. He possesses a temper as mild, and a heart as benevolent, as ever filled the human breast. He would not touch, injuriously, the hair of a slaveholder's head, to emancipate every slave in the land. After languishing eight months in prison, to the great injury of his health, he was put on trial for his life, as an incendiary. He was acquitted;—there not being the shadow of a reasonable suspicion upon his conduct. He then fled the District.

#### R. G. WILLIAMS'S CASE.

During his trial, the testimony of Ransom G. Williams, of New York, was vitally important. He was summoned as a witness: but, being the friend of Crandall, and holding similar opinions, he was warned by Members of Congress, that his life would be endangered, if he appeared there.

And why could not Williams visit the Capital of "the freest nation on earth?" Was he suspected of being the secret emissary of the Holy Alliance? No. But, in a paper published by him in New York, he had uttered the sentiment, "*God commands, and all nature cries out, that man should not be held as property.*" For this, he was indicted in Alabama, and the Governor of that State, de-

manded him of the Governor of New York, as a fugitive from justice. For uttering this self-evident truth, he was forbidden, on peril of his life, to press with his foot, the soil of the District.\*

\* The following is the indictment of Mr. Williams, with the demand of the Governor of Alabama upon the Governor of New York, for his person. It will be remembered that Williams was never in Alabama.

First read an extract from the Constitution of Alabama. "Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty." Whether the sentiment of Williams, even though he had been a citizen of Alabama, is an "abuse of that liberty," let freemen decide. "*What has the North to do with slavery?*" Here is the answer.

(COPY OF INDICTMENT.)

*The State of Alabama, } Circuit Court, September term,  
Tuscaloosa county. } in the year of our Lord, 1835.*

The grand jurors for the state of Alabama, elected, empannelled, sworn, and charged to inquire for the body of Tuscaloosa county, upon their oath, present, that Robert G. Williams, late of said county, being a wicked, malicious, seditious and ill disposed person, and being greatly disaffected to the laws and government of said state, and feloniously, wickedly, maliciously and seditiously contriving, devising and intending to produce conspiracy, insurrection and rebellion among the slave population of said state, and to alienate and withdraw the affection, fidelity and allegiance of said slaves from their masters and owners, on the tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five, at, in the county aforesaid, feloniously, wickedly, maliciously and seditiously did cause to be distributed, circulated and published, a seditious paper, called "*The Emancipator*;" in which paper is published according to the tenor and effect following, that is to say:—"God commands, and all nature cries out, that man should not be held as property. The system of making men property has plunged 2,250,000 of our fellow countrymen into the deepest physical and moral degradation, and they are every moment sinking deeper." In open violation of the act of the General Assembly in such case made and provided, to the evil and pernicious example of all others in like case offending, and against the peace and dignity of the state of Alabama.

And the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present, that the said Robert G. Williams, on the said tenth day of September, in the year aforesaid, at, in the county aforesaid, wickedly, feloniously and seditiously, did then and there distribute, circulate and publish, or cause to be distributed, circulated and published, a seditious paper, called "*The Emancipator*," tending to produce conspiracy and insurrection among the slaves and colored population of said county and state, in contempt of the laws of the land, and against the peace and dignity of the state of Alabama.

P. MARTIN,

A true bill.

Attorney General of the State of Alabama.

WILLIS BANKS, Foreman of Grand Jury.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, ALABAMA. }  
Tuscaloosa, 14th Nov., 1835. }

Sir—I have the honor to transmit to you a demand, under the constitution and laws of the United States, for Robert G. Williams, and a copy of an

## DOCTRINES PROSCRIBED.—A DELUSION.

Sir, it is a delusion to think that "abolitionists" only are excluded from the Capital of your Nation. It is DOCTRINES which are outlawed there. And such doctrines! You, sir, could not visit the seat of our Federal Government in safety, if you dared to utter the noble sentiments in your Bill of Rights. The eloquent Channing has been denounced on the floor of Congress, this winter, as the vilest of incendiaries, and I would not insure his life there a day. The Genius of Slavery will not tolerate the sentiment, that "man should not be held as property." It presides at the Capital. Its altars are there. Its bloody decree has gone forth, "WORSHIP OR DIE"! Hundreds of thousands in this Nation, are outlawed at its own Capital, for holding and uttering the self-evident principles, on which its Constitution is founded, and in defence of which, Bunker's mount smoked with blood.

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH STRUCK DUMB IN CONGRESS.

In our National Legislature, freedom of speech is struck dumb, by the omnipotence of slavery; and its members, overawed in debate, cannot give utterance to their thoughts, without hazarding their lives. The Genius of Despotism presides over the public councils.

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indictment recently found against him by the grand jury of Tuscaloosa county in this state, for attempting to produce insurrection and rebellion among our slave population, in the manner set forth in the indictment. It is admitted that the offender was not in the state when his crime was committed, and that he has not *fled* therefrom, according to the strict literal import of that term; but he has evaded the justice of our laws, and according to the interpretation which mature reflection has led me to place upon the constitution, should be delivered up for trial to the authorities of this state.

My views, somewhat at length, are contained in a message which will be sent to the general assembly, which convenes on Monday next, and I take the liberty to enclose a copy of so much of it as embraces this deeply exciting and interesting subject. Should your Excellency concur with me in opinion, I have to request that Williams be arrested and confined until I can find an agent to conduct him to Alabama.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN GAYLE.

*His Excellency, Gov. MARCY.* [Note to 2d Edition.]



## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Witness the threat to assassinate JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, last winter, because he dared to vindicate the right of petition. Read the following audacious threat, by Waddy Thompson, of South Carolina, uttered on the floor of the House, during the present month. Mr. Adams had presented petitions, relating to slavery, and had propounded a question to the Speaker, about a certain petition. Concerning him, Mr. Thompson says,

‘Does that gentleman know that there are laws in all the slave States, and here, for the punishment of those who excite insurrection? I can tell him that there are such things as grand juries; and if, sir, the juries of this District have, as I doubt not they have, proper intelligence and spirit, he may yet be made amenable to another tribunal, and we may yet see an incendiary brought to condign punishment.’ \*

The French Convention, during the Reign of Terror, when the streets of Paris ran with blood, legislated at the point of the assassin’s steel. Said a member, as he arose to address the President, “the eyes of assassins flash upon us from those windows, and the gleam of their daggers is seen within these walls.” At this period, France was in name a Republic, in reality a Despotism. The American Congress is now the theatre, on which is re-acted the tragic scenes of the French Convention. I will read an extract of a private letter from Hon. John Quincy Adams, to a friend in this State, dated Washington, 26th January, 1837.

Says Mr. Adams, “My effort here has been, to sustain the right of petition in the citizen, and the freedom of

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\* When the news of this debate reached Charleston, S. C., the Mercury of the 15th Feb. said:—

“The public mind of the South must be now prepared for concerted and decisive action, or it never will be. Public opinion in the South would now, we are sure, *justify an immediate resort to force*, BY THE SOUTHERN DELEGATION—EVEN ON THE FLOOR OF CONGRESS—were they forthwith to seize and drag from the hall any man who dared insult them, as that eccentric old showman, John Quincy Adams, has dared to do. If there be laws against incendiaries in the District of Columbia, he should be indicted. If the privileges of the House are to screen an abolitionist who holds concert with the slaves of the District, it is time that *Virginia and Maryland* should interfere, and PUT DOWN SUCH A NUISANCE AS CONGRESS must be upon their borders.” [Note to 2d Edition.]

speech in this House, and the freedom of the press, and of thought, out of it. My freedom of speech in the House has been, and is, suppressed. The vindication of the rights of the people, must ultimately rest upon themselves." And, sir, to the vindication they will generously and promptly come; and their rulers must yield to the pressure of the public tide, or be overwhelmed.

#### THE PLOT THICKENS.

The war has but just begun. Of these trials, we have yet scarcely touched the border ground. Abolitionists may yet be Members of Congress. And, an unparalleled change of the public sentiment in their favor, shows that they soon will be. For **THE PEOPLE** will be abolitionists; and that they will elect men, who will faithfully represent them in Congress, I cannot doubt. Such Members will be among the proscribed; and will be lynched, as was Dresser, or be arrested, as was Crandall, for opinion's sake. And is Washington the spot for the Supreme Legislature of a free people? Shall our Representatives deliberate with threats of indictment in their ears, and gags in their mouths, and cords around their necks, and the assassin's steel at their backs? Slavery must fall there, or to this complexion it will come at last.

#### THE SUPREME COURT.—JUDGE LYNCH.

Judges of the Supreme Court, in expounding the rights of man, may yet be arraigned as incendiaries; or, perhaps, in their turn, stand as criminals at the bar of Judge Lynch's Court. The Charge of His Honor Judge Story, to the Grand Jury of Portsmouth, N. H., in 1820, in which he denounced slavery and the slave trade, has been indicted in this modern Court for the Correction of Errors. Lawyers, suspected of aversion to the "Patriarchal Institution," in their attendance upon the Supreme Court, may be put to death, without benefit of clergy.

#### DANIEL WEBSTER.

Daniel Webster, with his Plymouth Speech in his pocket, "may yet see an incendiary brought to condign

punishment." You, yourself, sir, if you shall dare to report on our petitions, in accordance with the cherished principles and policy of Massachusetts, will be outlawed at our Capital. How humiliating are such disclosures to an American heart! I again press the point; is this city of charters and chains, of gags and grand juries, of constitutions and kidnappers, the spot where the national business should be transacted, and the national honor dwell?

#### THE REMEDY.

The remedy for these evils is obvious. **ABOLISH SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT.** Remove the cause and the effect ceases.

#### FREEDOM AND SLAVERY ALWAYS AT WAR.

A wise Providence has so ordered, that perfect freedom and absolute slavery cannot, for a long time, co-exist on the same soil. The mighty throes, which now toss the body politic of this nation, are the strugglings of these opposite principles for the mastery. Freedom and Slavery! Sir, they are eternal antagonisms. They have no affinities, and will not be at peace with each other. Rather let us attempt to mingle light and shade, heat and cold, sickness and health, right and wrong, heaven and hell, than hope that freedom of speech, of debate, and the press, can dwell in the District of Columbia, or in this nation, while slavery is tolerated. Slavery is darkness, and free discussion is light. They cannot commingle. Freedom of speech and of the press, are now pouring a blaze of light from every part of the civilized world, upon the darkness of slavery. They are disclosing to view its haggard deformity; and smiting with fear and trembling the consciences of its abettors. Sir, its throne would stand more securely on the heaving crater of a volcano, than on the waves of free discussion. To perpetuate slavery, the conscience of the master must be buried. Free discussion sounds the blast of resurrection over its grave, and with the authority of God, bids it "**COME FORTH!**" Freedom of debate, on the floor of Con-

gress, and a free press in the District, would win over the conscientious slave holder, and thus, the ranks being broken, an invincible array of truth, would march into the very centre of the enemy's camp. Every converted slaveholder is a deserter, carrying strength and invaluable knowledge, over to the cause of freedom. His defection destroys the union of the opposing forces, and dispels the charm of invincibility, which hovers around their standard. Says Gen. Duff Green, (an acute observer,) "We have most to fear from the effect of organized action upon the consciences and fears of the slaveholders themselves; from the insinuation of these dangerous heresies [the equality of man, and the inalienability of human rights,] into our schools, our pulpits, and our domestic circles."\* Precious

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\* That free discussion is the engine by which slavery is to be destroyed, and that the South dreads *Words* more than *War*, read the following proofs :

Says JOHN C. CALHOUN :—"Do they [the southerners] expect the abolitionists will resort to arms, will commence a crusade to liberate our slaves by force ? \* \* Let me tell our friends of the South who differ from us, that the war which the abolitionists wage against us, is of a very different character, and *far more effective*,—it is waged not against our lives, but *our character*."

Says Gen. DUFF GREEN :—"We have most to fear from the gradual operation on public opinion among ourselves ; and those are the most insidious and dangerous invaders of our rights and interests, who, coming to us in the guise of friendship, endeavor to persuade us that slavery is a sin, a curse, an evil. It is not true that the South sleeps on a volcano,—that we are afraid to go to bed at night,—that we are fearful of murder and pillage. Our greatest cause of apprehension is from the operation of the morbid sensibility which appeals to the consciences of our own people, and would make them the voluntary instruments of their own ruin" *i. e.* Would persuade them to destroy a system which sucks out the life-blood of both master and slave !]

Says Gov. HAMILTON, in his report to the S. C. Legislature, after admitting there is no danger that the abolitionists will excite their slaves to insurrection : "Are we to wait until our enemies have built up \* \* a body of PUBLIC OPINION against us, which it would be almost impossible to resist without separating ourselves from the social system of the rest of the civilized world !" It is the dread of "public opinion" which makes cowards of them all.

In 1835, when the friends of liberty contended for free discussion, in Boston, at the hazard of their lives, the Boston Commercial Gazette, said, "Free discussion on the subject of slavery ! Ah, as Petruchio says, 'there's the villany !' The mischief all lies in a nut-shell. A free discussion on this subject leads at once to Abolition and Emancipation !" [Note to 2d Edition.]

confession! And so, lest the truth should reach the consciences of slave holders, at the Capital, and rouse their fears, they have offered up freedom of thought, of speech, and of the press, in Congress and out of Congress, on the altar of slavery.

#### OBJECT OF THE CESSION.

Says Mr. Pinckney in his celebrated Report, the District was ceded to the United States, "that there might be a seat for the Federal Government, where the power of self protection would be ample and complete." Is the self protection of Congress ample and complete, while its Members are compelled to say, "my freedom of speech in the House has been, and is, suppressed?" So too, of all other departments of the Federal Government. Then, let slavery there be abolished. And can it be that Congress has no right so to do, and thus render its own self protection, and that of the other branches of the Government, ample and complete, when that, according to Mr. Pinckney, was the very object of the cession?

#### SLAVERY ENDANGERS THE PUBLIC PROPERTY.

3. Slavery should be immediately abolished at the seat of the Federal Government, because it is dangerous to the security of the national property,—the public buildings, stores and archives,—and also, to the lives of the Members of Congress, to the liberties of the nation, and the perpetuity of our free institutions.

#### SLAVES ARE ENEMIES OF THE COUNTRY.

The slaves of that District have every natural inducement to be the deadly foes of this government. Holy writ informs us, that "oppression maketh a man mad;"—and the history of revolutions, written in blood, confirms its truth. On the annual return of our "nation's jubilee," the entire American people, in solemn assembly, declare that "all men are created equal," and pointing to the graves of their fathers, swear by their ashes, that "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." Our forts and our

navies, echo it back in articulate thunder. We laud the valor of the men of the Revolution, because for a trivial tax on tea and paper, unjustly imposed, they bared their bosoms to the shafts of battle, choosing rather to die instantly as freemen, than to live as slaves. But, is a tax on tea to be compared in atrocity with a tax on heart and sinew, body and soul?—an impost, which clutches the man himself, and drowns his entire being in the vortex of its rapacity? If you will not hear *me*, listen to Thomas Jefferson.

“What an incomprehensible machine is man! who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment be deaf to all those motives, whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose.”\*

And who whelms the slaves of our Capital in this tide of ‘misery’? **THE NATIONAL LEGISLATURE.** Its laws forge the chains, and rivet the manacles. And can the slave love such institutions, and such a country? Listen again to Jefferson.

“With what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one half of the citizens to trample on the rights of the other, transforms these into despots, and these into enemies; destroys the morals of one part, and the *amor patriæ* of the other.”†

Ay, sir, slavery destroys the “*amor patriæ*” of its victims. Who will rebuke the slave of the District, if he reason thus, “What is this Capitol to me? There the laws are framed which make me a brute. There the scourges are twisted that lacerate my back. What are these records and documents to me? They are the sources, whence my oppressor derives his arbitrary power. What to me are these arsenals and navies? Not for the protection of my wife and children, my property and life;—but to intimidate me to submission. I’ll plot (not *treason*, for I have no country) but rapine and flames, and thus glut my vengeance.” And, to the members of Congress he might say, “On me you inflict a bondage, one hour of

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\* Jefferson’s Correspondence.

† Jefferson’s Notes.

which is fraught with more misery than ages of that, which you rose in rebellion to oppose.' " \* 'Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.' † 'Give me liberty or give me death.' ‡ 'I'll perish in the last ditch in defence of my rights.' § Then to the onslaught. !"

#### WHO ARE THE INCENDIARIES.

Remember, sir, that I, in common with all abolitionists, counsel the slave to peace and to submission. We deny his right to fight even for liberty, and nothing would grieve us more, than to see him shed a drop of the slaveholders' blood. *We* are not the incendiaries. But your revolutionary monuments, your fourth of July orations, your patriotic odes, your military parades; *they* are incentives to insurrection. Southern members of Congress say, they dread insurrection because of the agitation of this question. If sincere, *they* certainly have need to dread it in the District of Columbia.

In my premises under this head, I asserted that slavery in the District, was dangerous to the liberties of the nation, and the perpetuity of our free institutions. I will illustrate this in two ways.

#### SLAVES DANGEROUS IN TIME OF WAR.

(1.) In case of a war with a foreign power, slavery in the District, and the state of things consequent upon its existence, would open a door through which an invading foe, might enter, and take possession of the Capital. Let him enter that ten miles square, and write upon his banner, "freedom and protection to the slave who will join our standard," and they might go over to the invaders in a body. At best, they would be a dangerous population.

#### THE WAR OF 1812.

Let facts admonish us. In the war of 1812, Washington was invaded, the Capitol burnt, the public archives sacked,

\* Jefferson.

‡ Patrick Henry.

† War cry of the Revolution.

§ McDuffie.

and the President compelled to flee for his life. The free whites in the District were too busy in watching their slaves, and preparing to protect their property and their lives from an expected revolt, to lend any aid in repelling the invaders. This humiliating and admonitory truth, was acknowledged by Southern presses, and has been admitted to a gentleman of my acquaintance, by inhabitants of the District. What a sublime spectacle, to see the citizens of the Capital of "the freest government on earth," in time of a foreign invasion, so busy in taking care of their slaves, that they could not protect the Capitol and the Chief Magistrate of the nation, from fire and sword! Sir, it ever will be so, where slavery is tolerated. During the Southampton insurrection, fifty negroes rode in triumph through that county, and the chivalry of the Ancient Dominion, fled in panic before them. Each planter was watching his own slaves. And the United States' troops finally quelled the insurrection. By the Constitution, Congress has power to "provide for the common defence and general welfare." As a citizen, I protest against Congress keeping a magazine of powder in that District, liable at any moment to explode, and desolate the country.

#### THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD.

(2.) The continuance of slavery there and elsewhere, endangers the perpetuity of our Republic, because it provokes the judgments of God. Certainly, Mr. Chairman, this consideration will not be lost upon the Legislators of a professedly Christian state. Domestic tyranny is the fatal shoal upon which many a proud state of antiquity, has laid its bones. The fragments of Greece and Rome, magnificent in their ruins, should warn us from following in their fatal track. The American nation is intoxicated with the delusion, that her liberties are impregnable. That there is, in the structure of her government, some perennial conservative, by which she will rise elastic and invigorated from assaults without and commotions within. An inflated patriotism utters the delusive words, *Esto perpetua!* An



indomitable ambition, echoes them back, *Esto perpetua!* An ineffable self-complacency, which has dethroned reason, mistakes the echo for the voice of God. And, like the victim of consumption, hope is strongest in the hour of dissolution! Fatal charm! True, the voice of God is heard: but it is in startling denunciation. Look over our country, and see it tossing on the wild waves of civil commotion. Look into our national councils, and see them rent by civil feuds. The humble Christian, who reads his Bible, and communes with his God, knows the cause. For it, he looks beyond Tariffs, and Banks, and the rivalry of parties. He sees that this nation has forgotten God. That she has grown rich upon His mercies, and then, in her pride, has trodden the Indian and the Negro, whose condition entitled them to her generous protection, under the hoof of her ambition. During her mad career of folly and crime, God's eye has been upon her, and His ear open to the cry of the perishing. The alternative of Jefferson is now presented to her. Let her choose. Says the sage of Monticello, speaking of the slaves,

“When the measure of their tears shall be full,—when their groans shall have involved heaven itself in darkness,—doubtless a God of justice will awaken to their distress, and, by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or at length, by his EXTERMINATING THUNDER, manifest his attention to the things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality.”\*

#### FATE OF TYRE AND EGYPT.

But a greater than Jefferson has left us the record of nations overthrown by the “exterminating thunder” of Jehovah, for the sin of oppression. Where now is Tyre—the city of the sea—which “TRADED THE PERSONS OF MEN, and vessels of brass in her market?”—Desolate,—destroyed!—the plough-share of ruin, driven to the beam amidst her foundations, by the hand of Almighty God! What was the fate of slaveholding Egypt?—God visited her in judgment. Her first born perished at a blow. Death was in all the dwellings of her princes. But, the Hebrews

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\* Jefferson's Correspondence.

sprinkled the blood of a slaughtered beast upon their door-posts, and the Angel of the Pestilence passed over them, and they escaped. Let, then, the free states of this Union, if they would escape the coming storm of Divine displeasure, sprinkle the blood of slavery on the door-posts of our Capitol. So shall the Avenger pass over them and spare them, when He comes with His "exterminating thunder!"

Listen again to the author of the Declaration of Independence.

"And can the liberties of the nation be thought secure, when we have refused the only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country, when I recollect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that a revolution in the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events; and that it may become probable by a supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a contest."

Will not political men listen to prophecies like these? It is not necessary that Heaven should empty the reservoir of its wrath upon this nation, as it did upon Egypt. The materials of our ruin are ample within us, and around us. The Indian, the Negro, the Mexican, the Haytian, all have a fearful account to adjust with us. And, if our internal commotions increase in ferocity for a few coming years in the ratio of the past, we are a people dissevered, with no bond of union, and our fall will add another to the list of nations, ruined by their abuse of the mercies, and their contempt of the precepts of Jehovah.

#### SLAVERY DESTROYS NATIONAL REPUTATION.

4. It is expedient that slavery at the Capital should be abolished, because its toleration brings into contempt our nation's boasted love of equal rights, justly exposes us to the charge of hypocrisy, paralyzes the power of our free principles, and cripples our moral efforts for the overthrow of oppression throughout the world.

The citizens of this nation have deep responsibilities, as republicans, as Christians, as citizens of the world. Our

character and reputation, are moral capital, loaned us by God, to be invested for the political and moral renovation of the human race. The Reformers of South America and Europe, have anxiously looked to us as the pioneer nation in the cause of human liberty, and hoped that our experiment would demonstrate even to tyrants, that man is capable of self government. But, by cherishing in the heart of the republic such a system of cool blooded oppression, as the sun has rarely seen, we have rolled back the tide of reform in other nations, and cut the sinews of struggling humanity.

#### ENGLISH REFORMERS AND CONSERVATIVES.

The enemies of free principles in England, point to our slavery, our Lynch code, and our mob conservation, to prove, that Republics are the worst of Despotisms. Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the Conservatives in Great Britain, laughs us to scorn at the public dinners of the aristocracy, and cheered on by our hypocrisy, rides roughshod over the plebeian reformers. That slavery at our capital contributes largely to this aristocratic glee, permit me, in proof, sir, to read from a work, entitled, "Men and Manners in America," by Col. Hamilton, an English gentleman of high standing, who spent some time in our country. It is their substantial truth, which gives the sharp edge to his observations.

"Washington, the seat of Government of a free people, is disgraced by slavery. The waiters in the hotels, the servants in private families, and many of the lower class of artisans, are slaves. While the orators in Congress are rounding periods about liberty in one part of the city, proclaiming *alta voce*, that all men are equal, and that 'resistance to tyrants is obedience to God,' the auctioneer is exposing human flesh to sale in another! I remember a gifted gentleman of the Representatives, who, in speaking of the Senate, pronounced it to be 'the most enlightened, the most august, and the most imposing body in the world!' In regard to the extent of imposition, I shall not speak; but it so happened that the day was one of rain, and the effect of the eulogium was a good deal injured by recollecting that, an hour or two before, the members of this enlightened and august body, were driven to the Capitol by slave coachmen, who were at that very moment waiting to convey them back, when the rights of man had been sufficiently dissected on for the day."

How cutting the irony! It is good to know, that the

world regards us as hypocrites. It may lead to self-examination. He proceeds.

"That slavery should exist in the District of Columbia, that even the foot-print of a slave should be suffered to contaminate the soil peculiarly consecrated to Freedom, that the very shrine of the goddess should be polluted by the presence of chains and fetters, is perhaps the most extraordinary and monstrous anomaly to which human inconsistency—a prolific mother—has given birth."

Sir, these disclosures are nutrition to the despots of Europe. After devouring them, they go to their chain forging with renewed vigor. But to our extract.

"The man who would study the contradictions of individual and national character, and learn by how wide an interval, profession may be divided from performance, should come to Washington. He will there read a new page in the volume of human nature. He will hear the words of freedom, and he will see the practice of slavery. Men who sell their fellow-creatures, will discourse to him of indefeasible rights; \* \* \* he will be taught the affinity between the democrat and the tyrant; he will look for charters, and find manacles; expect liberality, and be met by bigotry and prejudice."\*

And to all this, Monarchs respond, "So mote it be!"—And can we reproach them, when the bondage we nourish has by them been exterminated?

Shall every flap of England's flag  
Proclaim that all around are free,  
From 'farthest Ind' to each blue crag  
That beetles o'er the Western Sea?  
And shall we scoff at Europe's kings,  
When Freedom's fire is dim with us,  
And round our country's altar clings  
The damning shade of Slavery's curse?

#### SNEERS OF A DESPOT.

James Brooks, a candidate for Congress, in Maine, at the last election, and now Editor of the New York Express, affirmed, in one of his letters from Europe, during his recent travels there, that, in the year 1835, when the iron code of Judge Lynch ruled our Republic, it was rumored, that the Emperor of Austria gave to some state criminals their option, to be sentenced to the galleys for life, or be banished to this country! Sir, are we sunk so low, that the contempt of tyrants cannot reach us?

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\* Men and Manners in America, pp. 279, 280.

Go—let us ask of Constantine  
 To loose his grasp on Poland's throat—  
 And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line  
 To spare the struggling Suliote.  
 Will not the scorching answer come  
 From turbaned Turk, and fiery Russ—  
 'Go, loose your fettered slaves at home,  
 Then turn and ask the like of us!'

Sir, I affirm, without fear of successful contradiction, that the present anti-slavery struggle in this country, is doing more, under God, to redeem our national character from these foul blots, and to cheer onward the work of reform in Europe, than all our republican toasts and democratic orations, our patriotic songs and civic processions, the speeches of our Senators, and the messages of our Chief Magistrates.

#### TAUNT OF THE SOUTH.

But upon us, as *northern* men, this point bears with peculiar pressure. The free States have the power to abolish slavery in the District. So long as we refuse to do it, with what face can we declare to our southern fellow-citizens, that we are opposed to slavery? Go there, sir, and reprove the slave holder, and urge upon him the duty of emancipation. He will meet you with the scorching rebuke, "Go back to your free States, and abolish your own slavery in the District of Columbia. Look to your own State Legislature at home, which dares not declare, that Congress ought to abolish the slavery in which your own Commonwealth is implicated. You opposed to slavery? Then pluck the beam from your own eye." Sir, would not your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth? Would you tell him, you were a member of the very Legislature, which denied the prayer of these memorialists? Ay, more! Should he know from your lips, that you were the chairman of the very committee, who reported against the prayer? Would fire burn this disclosure out of you? Excuse these personalities, sir, for I plead for those who cannot plead for themselves;—for those who have, by the highest legislative body in the Union, been denied the poor privilege of petitioning for mercy.

The north **MUST** abolish slavery in the District, or her moral power for the removal of slavery in the nation, is at an end.

#### CONGRESS DEFENDS SLAVERY ON PRINCIPLE.

5. This object should be accomplished without delay, so that Congress may speedily and effectually undo the wretched work of the last session. The report of the Hon. Mr. Pinckney, adopted last May, attempts to prove, that Congress ought not to *interfere*, IN ANY WAY, with slavery in the District, because, it would be unwise, impolitic, a violation of the public faith, (tantamount to a violation of the Constitution,) and dangerous to the Union; and, in addition to this, IT CONTAINS A THOROUGH DEFENCE OF SLAVERY ON PRINCIPLE, AS A WISE AND BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION! These doctrines were sanctioned by a body, a large majority of whose members are from the free States, and by it, were sent out to the world, as the voice of America. As a citizen of the free States, as an American, as a man, I repudiate, I abjure, I abhor them. They are not the sentiments of the free States, but a foul libel upon our freedom and our religion. The memorialists demand, that the Representatives from the free States, wipe out this blot; and atone for the outrage, by destroying the system, thus made the occasion of libelling both man and God. Where is the voice of this Commonwealth, when such doctrines are promulgated to the world, by the suffrages of New England? Is the padlock on *our* lips?

#### SLAVERY DESTROYS THE RIGHT OF PETITION.

6. Slavery in the District should be destroyed, because it is made the occasion of denying the sacred right of petition. The gentleman, who preceded me, (Mr. Hillard,) has dwelt at large on this point. But, I cannot pass it over in silence. The right of petition is the last, which a people, determined to be free, should ever surrender, or permit to be abridged. It is the barrier against the aggressions of the governors upon the governed;—the shield, by which the minority ward off the assaults of the majority. This government was established to protect the minority.

The unabridged right of petition is the corner stone of the edifice. The resolution passed by the House of Representatives on the 18th ultimo, is a fearful abridgment of this right.

THE DANGER.—TYRANNY OF PRECEDENT.

It is the *precedent* established by that resolution, which I most dread. We are a precedent-loving, a precedent-fearing nation. Our Courts of Justice, and our Legislative Halls, are the slaves of precedent. They worship their own folly, merely because it is their own folly. The people bow down to the same inexorable deity. *Precedent*, —PRECEDENT, is the order of the day; the divinity of the hour. Congress has, for certain causes, denied to the people the right of petition, in regard to Slavery. The precedent is established. To-morrow, for certain causes, she denies it in regard to the Currency. The precedent is strengthened. The next day, for the same cause, she refuses to receive petitions concerning the Tariff. The precedent, gathering courage, demands fresh victims. Petitions concerning Commerce, Intemperance, Indian Treaties, Secret Societies and Mobs, are next offered on the altar. The Idol becomes more rapacious. He demands, that ALL petitions shall be thrown back into the faces of the petitioners. The people, tamed into subserviency by yielding, without resistance, to reiterated aggressions, meekly bow the neck, and kiss the yoke. Mr. Chairman, the present crisis thunders in our ears, OBSTA PRINCIPIS OPPOSE BEGINNINGS! To launch forth in this stream of precedent, is ruin. The cataract is just below us. Let us stand on terra firma. Slight aggressions by Bonaparte, unresisted by the French people, encouraged to mightier strides in the road to arbitrary power. Step by step, he reached the summit of despotism, with willing slaves shouting their approving hosannas at his heels. OBSTA PRINCIPIS! At the last session, the House of Representatives took the first step. It cautiously surveyed the whole ground, before it set down its foot. The *present* session, the *precedent having been established*, it took the second step with

alarming promptitude. Let us prevent the third. How? By abolishing slavery in the District, now made the pretext for trifling with, trampling upon the inestimable right of petition.\*

#### OBJECTIONS.

Mr. Chairman ; I will now proceed to answer some *objections* to the sentiments which I have thought it my duty to advance.

#### INJURE THE SLAVE STATES.

It is uttered in Mr. Pinckney's report, and from other high sources, that the abolition of slavery at the seat of the Federal Government, would injuriously affect the slaveholding States, especially Maryland and Virginia; and, therefore, it would be unjust, and a violation of the public faith. In reply, it may be necessary to call the attention of the Committee, to the admitted facts, first, that Congress has the constitutional power to abolish slavery in the District; and, secondly, that abolition there, in itself considered, and when regarded as an isolated act, would be productive of great good. Our Bill of Rights, the Bible, and the history of emancipation, settle this. But 'it will injuriously affect other states.' Are those other States so circumstanced, that doing an admitted good in the District, will injure them? Then there must

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\* It will be recollected, that the preamble to Mr. Miner's resolution declares, 'that officers of the Federal Government \* \* \* derive emolument from carrying on the domestic slave trade.' At the last session of Congress, Hon. Gabriel Moore, Senator from Alabama, opposed the reception of petitions asking for the abolition of the slave trade in the District, because he said, they reflected upon him and his colleague, who had both purchased slaves in the District! The Hon. Senator does not stand alone. It is not unusual for members of Congress to purchase slaves at the Capital as agents for their constituents. Shall the right of Petition be sacrificed, to spare the delicate feelings of Congressional negro-traders?

Hon. Mr. Claiborne, Representative from Mississippi, at the session of Congress which has just closed, purchased slaves to the amount of \$60,000, and drove them home. I believe he purchased all, or nearly all of them, at the markets in the District. This gentleman has been loud in his denunciations of those "miserable fanatics" who have petitioned for the abolition of the slave trade in the District, and has been foremost in trampling the right of petition under foot. [Note to 2d Edition.]



be 'something rotten in the State of Denmark.' Injurious affect them on account of their slavery? Let them follow the example of Congress, and then they will have no slavery to be injured.

#### EXCITE INSURRECTION.

Mr. Pinckney argues at great length to prove, that abolition in the District would excite the slaves of the surrounding States to insurrection. Let those States then abolish slavery, and there will be no slaves to rise.

The doctrine of Mr. Pinckney, when sifted, seems to be this. Restoring to men in the District of Columbia their inalienable rights, will make men in Virginia and Maryland uneasy, because their inalienable rights are kept from them; *therefore*, men in the District, should not have their inalienable rights! That is; if I do right to *my* neighbor, it will give trouble to another man, who does wrong by *his* neighbor; *therefore*, I should not do right by *my* neighbor! Or thus: if we should give men in the District, their bodies and souls, it would endanger——tyrants! *therefore*, it is right, that *we* should rob them of their bodies and souls, and so ourselves be tyrants! It may be true, that the enjoyment of liberty by all men at the capital of 'the freest government on earth,' will endanger tyranny; but, I am yet to learn, that that fact will justify the enslaving of a considerable portion of its citizens.

#### A DOCTRINE CARRIED OUT.

What is the principle here involved? This;—The enjoyment of freedom by certain men endangers slavery, *therefore*, these men must be enslaved. Let the principle be applied. The people of color among us, enjoy freedom. This, we are told by the South, endangers slavery. Shall we, therefore, reduce them to slavery? Or, if so reduced by others, shall we leave them to perish, lest their deliverance should endanger oppressors? The laboring population of New England enjoy an enviable freedom. Patriarch McDuffie and his disciples, (and they are numerous,) inform us, that this endangers the perpetuity of their

'peculiar institutions,' and *therefore*, urge, that our farmers and mechanics be reduced to vassalage.

Sir, we have long known that our system of compensated free labor, was a bitter rebuke to the unpaid, coerced labor of the South. The elastic enterprise of Massachusetts; its busy machinery; its productive ingenuity; its blooming valleys;—the rugged hills of old Worcester, cultivated to their very tops by the indomitable energy of its husbandmen;—its smiling villages, with your own beautiful Templeton; \*—its flourishing cities;—the prosperity and happiness of its entire population, do indeed contrast strongly with the drivelling policy of the South, as evinced by its dishevelled, mildewed, blasted agriculture;—its sluggish trade;—its dilapidated towns;—with one half its inhabitants sunken in degradation, and the other, devoured with the lust of power and enervated with luxury;—where the very bondman himself, might laugh in his chains, to see how slavery has stricken the land with ugliness. Stung to the quick, in their insane chagrin, the advocates of that policy are calling to us:

'Ho—fishermen of Marblehead!—

Ho—Lynn cordwainers, leave your leather,  
And wear the yoke in kindness made,  
And clank your needful chains together!  
Let Lowell mills their thousands yield,  
Down let the rough Berkshire-man hasten,  
Down from the workshop and the field,  
And thank us for each chain we fasten.'

And will the Committee be consistent, and *carry out* the doctrine of the objection;—or, while they shall go for the deliverance of the working man in the District, will they respond to the proud Southron:—

'No—George M'Duffie!—keep thy words

For the mail plunderers of thy city,  
Whose robber-right is in their swords;  
For recreant priest and Lynch-Committee.

SLAVES in the rugged Yankee land!

We tell thee, Carolinian, never!

Our rocky hills and iron strand,  
Are free, and shall be free forever!

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\* The Chairman of the Committee resides in Templeton.

The surf shall wear that strand away,  
 Our granite hills in dust shall moulder,  
 Ere slavery's hateful yoke shall lay  
 Unbroken, on a Yankee's shoulder !

Sir : Every session of your legislature in this hall, strikes a blow at tyranny. Its influence reaches the petty despotisms of the South, and the Holy Alliances of Europe. It is crumbling the foundations of their power. Shall you, therefore, surrender your high trust, as the representatives of freemen ? Shall you cease to proclaim the holy doctrines of your Bill of Rights, because they grate on the ear of Tyranny ?

#### ABOLITION WILL PREVENT INSURRECTION.

But, sir, to return from this digression, to the subject in hand ;—insurrections. The memorialists desire no insurrections, neither have they the slightest expectation, that such an effect will result from abolition at the seat of the Federal Government. On the contrary, they believe that such an act would tend to prevent a calamity so disastrous. True, ‘ Hope deferred maketh the heart sick ; ’—but, hope *destroyed* maketh the heart *mad*—FEROCIOUS. If the slave ever rises, he will be driven to it by the goadings of despair. While hope lives he will patiently wear his chain.\* Emancipate the slaves in the District, and the benevolent deed would diffuse hope through the entire slave population of the South. Reason teaches us this. We naturally infer, that the unemancipated slaves, seeing one Legislature do justice to their bound brethren, would be inspired with the

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\* Hon. Mr. Page, of Virginia, in the Congress of the U. States, in 1790 when the question of committing the abolition memorial of Dr. Franklin, was under discussion, said, ‘ With respect to the alarm that was apprehended (in the slave states) he believed there was none ; but there might be just cause if this memorial was not taken into consideration. He placed himself in the condition of a slave. If, as such he should hear that Congress had refused to listen to the suggestions of a respectable portion of the community, he should infer, that the General Government, from which great good was expected to result to every class of citizens, had shut their ear against the voice of humanity, and he should despair of any alleviation of the miseries he and his posterity had in prospect. *If anything could induce him to rebel, it would be a stroke like this, impressing on his mind all the horrors of despair.*’—Lloyd’s Debates, vol. 3, p. 336.

expectation, that their own Legislature, influenced by their example, would, by and by, 'do likewise.'

#### JAMES G. BIRNEY'S TESTIMONY.

Facts corroborate the position. Letters in my possession from James G. Birney, Esq., well known to the Committee as the gentleman to whom Dr. Channing's recent letter was addressed, show that no slaves are so quiet, as those inhabiting sections of the country, where emancipations are most frequent; none so orderly, as those who best understand, to their full extent, and in their true character, the efforts now making for their deliverance. Surely these facts are something worth, coming from one of the most intelligent and pious gentlemen of the southwest, who has spent 43 years in the midst of slavery, and been himself a slaveholder. Let it also be remembered, that emancipation in the states of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, did not excite the slaves in Maryland and Virginia to insurrection. Then why should abolition in the District? And if it would be unjust to these states for Congress to abolish slavery there, it was equally unjust to them, for those other states to abolish slavery within their borders. And yet, I never heard any complaint of injustice on that account.

#### ABOLITION BENEFICIAL TO THE SLAVE STATES.

But, the proposed abolition would be signally beneficial to the surrounding states. Its local results being happy, would demonstrate the safety of emancipation, expose the futility of objections to it, and, by inspiring the southern communities with courage, pave the way for the voluntary removal, by them, of this alarming evil.

#### THE DISTRICT AN OASIS.

Another supposed injurious effect upon the surrounding states, from the proposed measure, is, that the District would become an asylum for runaway slaves, much to the annoyance of the neighboring planters.

- I answer, 1. Let those surrounding states emanci-

pate their slaves, and then there would be none to run away.

2. Suppose it should become such an asylum. We ought to bless God, that there was one Oasis, one green spot in this vast desert of human misery. What more appropriate asylum for men escaping for freedom, from 'a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which [we] rose in rebellion to oppose,'\* than the capital of 'the land of the free, and the home of the brave?'

3. But, Sir, look at the alternative. If slavery is abolished in the District, says Mr. Pinckney, it will become the asylum of runaway slaves. Answer. If slavery is *not* abolished in the District, it will continue to be the asylum for slave-drivers, kidnappers, and brokers in human souls.

4. The objection is absurd, as well as wicked. Every free state is now an asylum for runaway slaves, as are the West Indies, Mexico, our western forests, and the monarchies of Europe. And will the addition of ten miles square to this territory, ruin the slavery of the South? Then Heaven speed its downfall!

#### A DILEMMA.

Another grave objection has been furiously urged upon our notice. Say Southern gentlemen, on the floor of Congress, 'if slavery is abolished at the seat of the national legislature, we cannot bring our servants here.' I answer,

1. Then go there without servants, as did Roger Sherman. He was not only a shoe-maker, but he brushed his own shoes while in Congress.

2. But I deny the inference. Can't bring their servants there? Northern members find no difficulty in taking their servants there. Ah,—but Southerners can't take their *slaves* there. Yes: I now understand the gentlemen. They can't take men there, to do their work for them, *unless they pay them wages*. Surely, to deprive them of this '*honorable*' privilege, (for 'they are all *honorable* men!') would indeed be cruel!

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\* Jefferson.

3. It would certainly be a mournful calamity, Mr. Chairman, if the legislators of 'the freest government on earth,' should not have slaves to tremble at their nod, while discussing the rights of man! If the question of the recognition of Texan independence were on debate, would our Southern brethren not feel the glow of liberty warming their bosoms, and setting their tongues on fire, unless slaves were crouching around them?

4. But, Sir, the alternative is before us. Say the South, 'if slavery is abolished at the capital, our members cannot carry their slaves there.' The North answers: 'if slavery is *not* abolished there, our members will not be able to invite their free constituents there!'

Finally. Perhaps, Sir, (though I care too little about it, to investigate it, even to my own satisfaction,) Congress might pass laws, providing for the deliverance, to their masters, of fugitive slaves in the District, and securing to its Southern members, while there, their enslaved servants. I do not believe such laws would be more unconstitutional than are those which established slavery in the District.

The Committee then took a recess till seven o'clock, P. M.

#### EVENING SESSION.

The Committee met, pursuant to adjournment, in the Representatives' Hall.

In continuance of his argument, Mr. Stanton spoke in substance as follows:—

#### MR. CHAIRMAN:

When the Committee adjourned for a recess, I was answering objections to abolition in the District. With your leave, I will resume the same subject, after expressing my warmest thanks to the Committee for their patient indulgence, in extending to the memorialists, through me, so long a hearing. It contrasts generously and honorably, with the conduct of another Committee of this Legislature,

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\* Witness the cases of Dr. Crandall, and R. G. Williams. Other gentlemen have been deterred from visiting the District, for fear of personal violence, because they held the doctrines of Jefferson, Franklin, and Jay.

upon a similar subject, on a former occasion. I will first dispose of one or two small objections, and then discuss those of weightier importance.

#### ABOLITION CONTRARY TO THE WISHES OF MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA.

Maryland and Virginia contend that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia should not be urged contrary to their wishes, because they ceded the territory to the General Government.\*

Sir, suppose a farmer in your county should convey to his neighbor by deed, in absolute fee simple, ten acres of his farm. The sold and the unsold portions contained each a noxious swamp. In process of time, the purchaser proposes to drain off his swamp, that it may no longer scatter fever and ague through the community. Against this, the original holder stoutly protests; not because it would be contrary to the terms of the deed, nor bad policy, nor wrong, but, simply because he has not got ready to drain off *his* swamp! So Maryland and Virginia exclaim hotly against abolition in the District, not because it would be unconstitutional, or bad policy, or injurious, or wrong, but, simply, because they have not yet got ready to do likewise!†

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\* Whoever will read the debates of the first Congress, on the subject of the location of the seat of Government, will perceive, that instead of its being considered a favor to the United States for Virginia and Maryland to cede the 'ten miles square' to Congress, the very privilege of doing so was a boon for which these states contended almost to ferocity. Congress did not ask the land of them. They, on the other hand, begged, declaimed, and threatened, to induce that body to accept it. Mr. Lee, of Virginia, insisted, that, 'if the seat of the Government was not fixed upon the Potomac, the faith of all south of that river would be shaken.'—Lloyd's Debates, vol. 2.

† It has been urged with great vehemence at the South, and even at the North, that if Congress should abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, it would, as the next step, abolish slavery in the several states, and therefore, at all hazards, it must be resisted. This is the reasoning of Messrs. Calhoun and Preston. Last year, the Legislature of North Carolina "Resolved, that although, by the Constitution, all legislative power over the District of Columbia is vested in the Congress of the U. S., yet we would deprecate any legislative action on the part of that body towards liberating the slaves of that District, \* \* \* and *will regard such interference as the first step towards a general emancipation of the slaves of the South.*" Here is a specimen of

## WAIT TILL THE CITIZENS OF THE DISTRICT PETITION.

It has been urged by Hon. Mr. Wise, of Va., in the U. S. House of Representatives, that that body had no right to abolish slavery in the District, 'unless the inhabitants, owning slaves, *themselves petition for it.*'

Strange doctrine! Congress no right thus to do till the people *petition* for it? When the people petition a legislative body, do they not ask that body *to exercise a power it ALREADY POSSESSES?* Does the act of petitioning *create* the power? Are the people of the District able to confer power upon Congress? Cite me, Sir, to the article in the Constitution which thus pre-eminently distinguishes this portion of our fellow citizens. The honorable Virginian, *wise* as he is, for once, 'is wise above what is written.'

## THE WISHES OF THE DISTRICT.

The objection now assumes a more plausible garb. It is affirmed that it would be unjust for Congress to exercise this power, *unless the people of the District DESIRE it.*

Plausible as this proposition is, it contains the essence of injustice. The national legislature is solemnly bound, on principles of common equity, to consult the desires and the interests of the slaves, rather than those of the masters. The slaves are the injured party, the masters the wrong doers. Slavery is an acknowledged evil, 'fraught with misery.' Robbery and stealing are also evils. What! shall your Legislature not enact laws against robbery and

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slave-holding logic! Because Congress, in the exercise of its constitutional authority, abolishes slavery in the District, *therefore*, without constitutional authority, it will abolish it in the States! If Congress does a constitutional act, that fact is conclusive evidence, that it will do an unconstitutional act! And so it must not be permitted to act constitutionally, because, taking advantage of this permission, it will assuredly act unconstitutionally; and therefore, it behoves the Southern delegation in Congress, to resort to force on its floor, and drag from its Halls that old showman John Quincy Adams, if he dares to present another petition from his constituents:—and the sovereign states of Maryland and Virginia should forthwith put down Congress as a nuisance! Sublimated nonsense! Slavery not only makes men tyrants; but fools. [Note to 2d Edition.]



stealing, till highwaymen and thieves desire it? Will you wait to be moved by their petitions? Did the British Parliament refuse to abolish the slave trade, till men-stealers desired it? till the manufacturers of gags, and thumb-screws, and fetters, petitioned them? History informs us, that it was eloquently urged on the floor of Parliament, that the abolition of the slave trade would ruin thousands who had invested their all in ships, whips, spoiled meat, handcuffs, and other means and facilities for conducting the traffic, and therefore, it would be unjust for that body to interfere! The modern objection does not disgrace its origin.

Admit, if you please, that the slaveholders at the capital are unwilling to pay their laborers wages. Does that make *the laws right*, under which they perpetrate this injustice? Congress is responsible for the character of its laws, whoever they may please or displease. *It* forges the chain, hands it to the slaveholder—he puts it on to the heel of the victim. Congress is bound instantly to stop forging chains; or, without a figure, to stop legalizing robbery. This done, and slavery dies.

But, as to the wishes of the people of the District. They have again and again asked for modifications of their laws;—and in 1827, eleven hundred of the most respectable citizens, with Chief Justice Cranch at their head, petitioned Congress for the abolition of the slave trade, and the gradual abolition of slavery in the District. Many of the inhabitants now desire legislative redress from these evils; but, by Southern intrigue, and because Congress, by its conduct, frightens them into silence, their action is stifled.\*

#### DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION!

But, the *Union!* THE UNION! abolition in the District of Columbia will dissolve the Union! So says Mr. Pinck-

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\* It should be borne in mind, that the District has no means of legislative redress except from Congress. Some of the worst laws now in force in the District, (such as selling free men for their jail fees,) have been repealed in Maryland since the cession. Hence, the slaves in the District are worse off, governed by the free states, than they would be if governed by a slave state.

ney; so say all south of the Potomac; so say thousands north of it. Sir, I love this Union, because it was formed to 'establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.' \* I would deal candidly with this objection, honestly entertained, as I have no doubt it is, by thousands.

#### THE QUESTION STATED.

Let us inquire—*first*, what would be a dissolution of the Union,—and *second*, the reasons why the South would dissolve it. Of these in their order.

1. After the Revolutionary war, the old states, then existing as independent sovereignties, framed and ratified the U. S. Constitution, and thus became UNITED States, —the Constitution being the connecting chain. To dissolve this Union, it is necessary that one or more of these states (or others since admitted) should, by Convention, or otherwise, declare themselves no longer members of the Confederacy, and organize a separate and independent government.

2. Upon the happening of what event does the South propose thus to do? *The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, by Congress.* But, has not Congress the power to abolish slavery there? Yes; the majority of the South admit it, as well as the great mass at the North. Whence does Congress derive this power? From the Constitution. It is one of the provisions in the bond of Union;—a bond solemnly ratified by the South. In view of the facts, she stands in this attitude, viz:—If Congress does what the South has agreed that it may do, she will become angry, and dissolve the Union! In other words, she is sick of her bargain, and declares, that if Congress does a constitutional act, she, from spite, will do an unconstitutional act! And this she denominates patriotism! honor! chivalry!

But, Sir, I am of those who regard these threats as the idle wind. They have been made too often, and too long, to excite alarm. They come, too, from the wrong quarter to arouse my fears. They are the vaporings of Hotspurs; mere bravado. There is too much intelligence, too much patriotism and integrity—ay, too just an appreciation of their own interests, at the South, to tolerate the mad scheme. The Riveses and the Clays of that section, are unwilling to pay so dear a price for the privilege of being ruined. And if they were, **THE PEOPLE** of the South would come to the rescue.

**THE SOUTH WILL LOSE WHAT THEY INTEND TO GAIN.**

Sir, if the slaveholding states should make the removal of slavery at the seat of the Federal government, the pretext for dissolving the Union, they would lose the very objects they professedly seek to obtain by it; and this truth is so plain, that he that runneth may read it, and a wayfaring man, though a slaveholder, cannot err in regard to it. What do they set up as the objects to be attained by the dissolution? *First*—the security of their slave property, and the perpetuation of the system. *Second*—the stopping of the present anti-slavery agitation; or, *Third*—if they cannot entirely stop agitation, they will, at least, shut out its effects from their borders.

Now, Sir, does not the South know, that by a severance of the Union, she will not only fail to attain either of these objects, but, in regard to them all, stand on ground far more disadvantageous, than that she now occupies?

**WILL IT PREVENT ESCAPES?**

*First*—as to the security of their slave property, and the perpetuation of the system. Under the *present* compact, if slaves escape to the free states, we are bound, on demand, to deliver them up. And the whole civil and military power of the North, may be put in requisition, to return the fugitives. Methinks the autocrat of Russia could ask no more, to insure the return of his Polish refugees. But, if the Union were dissolved, how altered

the aspect ! Does the South imagine that that act will widen the Ohio river, or make the boundary line between the Ancient Dominion and the good old Quaker state of Pennsylvania, aught but an *imaginary* one ? The Union being rent, the runaway slave of Virginia comes up to the line between slavery and freedom. He hesitates a moment with fear ; but, gathering fresh courage, he leaps it at a bound ! For once, he breathes the pure and thrilling atmosphere of freedom. No bribed dough-face stands ready to seize him, and hurl him back, but warm hands greet him. Turning, he beckons onward his halting companions. A black tide pours over the line, and lo ! the South is emptied of her slaves !

#### WILL IT PREVENT INSURRECTIONS ?

Again, Sir, under the *present* compact, if the slaves, goaded to madness by their unmitigated bondage, rise in insurrection, the whole physical power of the free states, is pledged, by Article 1. Sec. 8, of the Constitution, to quell the insurgents. The North stands, bayonet in hand, over the bosom of the southern slave. This surely might satisfy reasonable oppressors. But, suppose the Union were severed, and the free states released from the responsibility of quelling insurrections. Then, the inflammable mass at the South, ignited by the incendiary declaration, 'Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God !' explodes, scattering desolation and death on every side ! Where now is the boasted chivalry of Virginia and her proud sisters ? Buried under an avalanche of ruin ! The North, no longer bound to keep guard, while one half of the South put fetters on the heels of the other, stands aloof from these sanguinary scenes.\* Or, if that hour should

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\* In confirmation of the position here taken, read the following, from the Maryville Intelligencer, published at Maryville, *Tennessee*.

"We, of the South, are emphatically surrounded by a dangerous class of beings—degraded, stupid savages, who, if they could but once entertain the idea that immediate and unconditional death would not be their portion, would re-act the St. Domingo tragedy. But a consciousness, with all their stupidity, that a ten-fold force, superior in discipline, if not in barbarity, would gather from the four corners of the United States, and slaughter them,

never come, (which Heaven grant!) suppose, in process of time, a war should break out between these rival nations, (not an improbable event,) how easy for a Northern emissary to cross the line, breathe insurrection into the ear of the slave, and then, his bloody purpose accomplished, hasten back to his own country. Or, a daring leader of the Northern forces, inscribing 'freedom' on his banners, might enter the South, and bear off in triumph, thousands of her slaves. Sir, the slave states would be insane to dissolve this Union. They *now* stand upon the verge of a frightful precipice. But there is hope. *Then* they would have taken the fatal leap. So obvious is this truth, that while Heaven vouchsafes to them a modicum of sanity, they will never commit this suicidal deed.\*

#### WILL IT STOP AGITATION?

*Second.* The south threatens to secede from the Union, as a means of suppressing the present anti-slavery agitation. Indeed! And does this agitation trouble her? Doubtless. We recollect Felix trembled. But, are the means she proposes to employ, adapted to secure the end? How would South Carolina's *resolutionizing* herself into an independent Republic (a difficult task, by the bye, as a majority of her inhabitants are slaves!) prevent our agitating the question of slavery in the Representatives' Hall of old Massachusetts? Or, how could the Constitution

**KEEPS THEM IN SUBJECTION.** But to the non slave-holding states, particularly, we are indebted for a permanent safeguard against insurrection. Without their assistance, the white population of the Southern States would be too weak to quiet that innate desire for liberty, which is ever ready to act itself out with every rational creature." [Note to 2d Edition.]

\* The Maryville (Tennessee) Intelligencer puts the following serious interrogations to the South, which are here in point.

"What, short of madness, produced by a jaundiced and distorted conception of the feelings and motives by which the northern abolitionists are actuated, can induce the southern political press to urge a severance of the tie that binds our Union together? to offer rewards for the heads of those very individuals who stand as mediators between master and slave, urging the one to be obedient, and the other to do justice? to provoke the displeasure of a people whose benevolence has been so greatly felt in planting and supporting the Gospel standard—enforcing the precepts and morality of the Bible, on both master and slave?" [Note to 2d Edition.]

of a southern Republic, handsomely written on parchment, and snugly deposited in the desk of its Secretary of State, hinder the publication of anti-slavery tracts, the delivery of anti-slavery speeches, the holding of anti-slavery conventions, and the formation of anti-slavery societies, in free, unawed New England? I do know that the dissolution of the Union, while it would destroy all pretext for abridging the freedom of speech and the press among us, would be to minds now torpid, like the galvanic battery, arousing them to indomitable action. And, if the south does indeed dread a noise on this subject, she had better not put the torch to the magazine of the Union, lest the explosion should wake up, not only the moral power of the north, but her own slumbering conscience.

#### WILL IT SHUT OUT ABOLITIONISM?

But, *third*: by dissolving connection with the north, the slaveholding states will certainly shut out from their borders the effects of anti-slavery agitations, if they cannot stop them. NEVER! The effects of anti-slavery agitations are not hemmed in by state lines, nor circumscribed by local boundaries. They are moral in their nature; obey no laws but those of the human mind; owe allegiance to no constitution but that of the immortal soul. Impalpable yet real, the truths we proclaim overleap all geographical divisions, and lay their strong grasp upon the conscience. Moral light, diffused at the north, is like the Aurora Borealis. It will travel onward to the south. The slaveholder may intrench himself behind bristling bayonets:—but the truth, armed with the omnipotence of its Author, breaks through the serried legions. At Mason & Dixon's line, he may pile his prohibitory statutes to the clouds, as his wall of defence, but truth, like light, is elastic and irrepressible;—and, mounting upward, will overleap the summit, and penetrate his concealment. Yea, Sir, if the Union were rent into ten thousand fragments—yet, if on every fragment there was a slaveholder, anti-slavery agitation would search him out, and scatter upon his naked

heart the living coals of truth. God has written the verity of our principles on the inside of every oppressor in the land. He can destroy the record only with his nature. And, if the American slaveholder, returning wearied from the destruction of every anti-slavery pamphlet, and press, and society, and man in the nation, should seek repose in his chamber, these words, written with the finger of God, would flame out from its walls, in letters of blinding intensity: 'WO UNTO HIM THAT BUILDETH HIS HOUSE BY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HIS CHAMBERS BY WRONG; THAT USETH HIS NEIGHBOR'S SERVICE WITHOUT WAGES, AND GIVETH HIM NOT FOR HIS WORK!'

The dissolution of the Union stop inquiry concerning slavery? Delusive hope. It will multiply it a thousand fold;—and the South itself will contribute largely to the increase. The rent cannot be made in a moment. Various preliminary steps must be taken. County and State conventions must be convened. Hearts will quake and lips will quiver. The Hotspurs must whip their followers up to the top of their courage before they will do the deed. And all this time, there will be hot debate among them. Every body inquiring;—loud discussions in bar-rooms and on steam-boats; the southern press taking opposite sides;—Legislative halls the arena of warm dispute; pulpit clashing with pulpit;—Nullification times come again;—the old Union party once more taking the field;—and the whole South, slaves, free negroes, and all, one foaming sea of agitation! And what is the matter? Has Garrison, or the Liberator, got among them? Oh no;—but Patriarch McDuffie is about dissolving the Union, to perpetuate slavery; and every body is discussing the question! To thus stop agitation, is like putting out fire with gunpowder. Sir;—let the South attempt to divide the Union, and she will find *herself* divided.\* She knows, that, while on the

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\* As a proof that the South, should she attempt a dissolution of the Union, would find *her own people divided*, I quote the following extract from a speech, made at a public dinner in Charleston, since the adjournment of Congress, by Hon. Senator Preston, of S. C.

"He was in the House when it was supposed a member presented a pe-

one hand, she will lose every thing, on the other, she will gain nothing but what she has already taken. She professes to fear, that, under Sec. 2, Art. 4, of the Constitution, giving the citizens of each State, the privileges of citizens in all the States, incendiaries will enter her borders;—and so she's for nullification. But, that section she has already nullified, and has declared every Abolitionist who enters her territory, an outlaw. Does she hope, that by disunion, she will prevent Anti-Slavery publications from entering her territories, through the public mails! That she has already attempted, by her mail committees, Lynch clubs, and statutory provisions.

#### THERE IS NO UNION.

And shall Northern men dread disunion, lest they lose these benefits? Sir, they are already lost! For tens of thousands in this land, yielding to none others in love to their country and to all its citizens, there is no Union. To them, it is already dissolved. A price is on their heads, in one half of the States of this Republic. Such men, at least, will not be driven from their duty, by the threat of disunion. And, it is time the entire North began to reflect, that this Union was formed to 'promote the *general* welfare;' and not the welfare of the few, at the expense of the many.\*

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tion from slaves. Never should he forget that scene; he rushed involuntarily and unconsciously into the midst of the crowd that the frenzy of the moment had swept together; he felt that the long-dreaded crisis had at length burst upon them, that the Union was dissolved, that the bright quiet of peace had been suddenly put out in the blackness of fierce and deadly contention. Next morning, that part of the House where southern members sat was empty—not a seat in it was occupied. The other side was filled with an amazed and anxious assembly.—The motion of the south had come like a thunder stroke upon them, and they felt all the depth of the difficulty into which they had plunged. Then was to be seen, (continued the orator,) the fatal effects of southern divisions. Had the southern members continued firm for two hours, the north would herself have done us justice, and given us a pledge of lasting security; but they looked round upon each other, and gathering up the scattered embers of domestic party, forgot that they were southern statesmen—they dropped away by one and two into their seats, and left the great question where they found it." [Note to 2d Edition.]

\* I copy the following from a recent number of the *National Enquirer*. Philadelphia. Isaac T. Hopper, of New York, is a venerable member of



## THE THREAT NOT SINCERE.

Upon the South, this Union confers incalculable benefits. She knows it. Her safety,—her existence, depend upon its continuance. She feels it. The majority of her citizens appreciate, in some degree, its blessings; and when the crisis comes, will, at all hazards, prolong its existence. There is worth, intelligence, patriotism, integrity, at the South. Hotspurs will bluster, and threaten. It's their vocation. They have plied it long. Once they demanded a tariff, and threatened to rend the Union if we did

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the Society of Friends. He is a member of the old abolition society of former days, but not a very active member of that of the present time. If Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, or Richard Rush, were now living, could they visit Savannah in safety?

## “MURDEROUS OUTRAGE AT SAVANNAH.

*The Life of a Citizen of N. York placed in Jeopardy.*

We have just seen a letter from New York, to a friend in Philadelphia, giving a concise account of a mob in Savannah, threatening the life of a worthy young man, who had visited that place on business. We have not obtained all the particulars of this brutal outrage,—but hope to be able to furnish our readers with a detailed statement very soon. The facts are briefly these:—

John Hopper, of New York, arrived at Savannah on the morning of the 28th of January last; and being recognized by some one who knew him, to be the son of Isaac T. Hopper, a noted friend of the cause of emancipation, he was closely watched until night, when a mob entered the hotel, brutally assaulted him, broke open his trunks, &c. &c. The mayor and some of the aldermen were called in, and prevented the sacrifice of his life, by thrusting him into prison; yet the jail was several times surrounded during the night, by the mob, who threatened to imbrue their hands in his blood.

By the exertions of the city authorities, however, he was at length favored to escape, privately, to a vessel in the harbor. His retreat was discovered the next day, and a plan laid to attack the vessel at night. As soon as it was dark, the captain sent him in his boat to another vessel, lying about four miles down the river, and bound to Providence. There he arrived a few days since, and from thence returned to New York in safety.

We have not space at this time, to express our feelings upon the abominable outrage here adverted to. An unsuspecting youth to be thus maltreated—*merely because he was known to be THE SON of a member of the society of which FRANKLIN was president!*—is so gross and palpable an infringement of the rights of our citizens, that it calls for the serious consideration of our statesmen. What is the Federal Union worth, if things of this nature are to be tolerated? There is not, probably, a set of cannibal savages on the globe, more devilish in heart, or murderous in design, than the infuriate rabble who do the bidding of the despotic slave-holders of our Southern States.” [Note to 2d Edition.]

not yield. We bowed the head, in humble compliance. Again they said, 'let Missouri enter the Union, or it's dissolved.' We bowed again. 'Repeal the protective tariff, or we'll withdraw.' Prostrate, we kissed the dust. 'Touch not the District of Columbia;—cease your interference with our domestic institutions;—gag your citizens, and yoke your working men, or we'll split the Union.' **THE NORTH STANDS ERECT.\***

In conclusion, Sir, I remark, that the right of the South to dissolve her connection with her sister States, without their consent, is not the doctrine of this nation;—and should she, madly bent on ruin, attempt to carry away the main pillars of the Republic, the whole weight of the General Government will be precipitated upon her head.

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\* The Southern threat about dissolving the Union is rapidly becoming a nuisance. It is worse than

“——— a thrice-told tale,  
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man.”

The threat is co-existent with the Union itself. In the Convention which framed the Constitution, the delegates from Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, declared, that those states would never enter the Union, if Congress was to have power ever to abolish the foreign slave trade. (See exposition of Hon. Luther Martin to the Legislature of Maryland.) Yet, this power *was* delegated to Congress, and these states *did* enter the Union.

When the law was passed, abolishing the foreign slave trade, the threat was renewed. For proof, see the following extract from the Newport (R. I.) Mercury, of March 14th, 1807.

“*‘Preserve the Union.’* A smart debate has taken place in Congress on the *slave trade* bill. Mr. John Randolph, the day after the bill passed both houses, moved that leave be given to bring in a bill to explain the law :—a law which he denounced as the most frightful and abominable ever passed ;—and against which he expected *protests* would be sent from all the states south of the Potomac ; and he hoped, too, from Maryland. *He declared, if the law went into force as it was, he doubted whether we should ever see another southern delegate on that floor. He, for one, would say, if the Constitution is thus to be violated, let us secede and go home.* Mr. Smilie said, the gentleman (Mr. R.) talked of the Southern States seceding from the Union. If they do not like the Union, let them say so,—in the name of God, let them go,—we can do without them. Mr. Randolph explained, and said Mr. S. grossly misrepresented him. He looked, he said, upon Union, as the means of our liberty, happiness and safety,—as the means, and not the end. But, if Union and the manumission of slaves are to be put in the scale, let Union kick the beam ! Mr. Randolph’s motion was carried, and a committee of three appointed.”

And yet, the law *did* go into force substantially as it was, and we have seen Southern delegates, on that floor, from that hour up to the present. And doubtless we shall see them there, after slavery is abolished in the District of Columbia. [Note to 2d Edition.]

## DUTY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Mr. Chairman, I now come to the last topic proposed for our examination ;—to wit :—THE DUTY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

That the Legislature of this Commonwealth has the right to grant the prayer of these Memorialists, is conceded. Our inquiry is, *ought the right to be exercised?* Sir, slavery is acknowledged by your State, to be a system at war with the fundamental principles of our free institutions, unjust, cruel, wicked. Then is she bound to exert her utmost political and moral power, for its destruction. To terminate slavery in the District of Columbia, is within the power of the free States. And, so long as Massachusetts remains a member of this Union, and sends Senators and Representatives to Congress, she has political responsibilities in regard to that question. The God of Nations has laid them upon her. She cannot escape them. If she refuse to discharge these responsibilities, she is recreant to her trusts. The seven thousand bondmen of that District, lift their manacled hands to her for redress. It is noble to protect the weak. The freedom of her own citizens, the perpetuity of our republic, the cause of political and moral reform abroad, are jeopardized by the toleration of slavery at the seat of the Federal Government. For the rescue of these from immolation, she is bound to go to the utmost limit of her Constitutional power.

## SHALL OUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BE SUSTAINED ?

The Legislature should grant the prayer of the Memorialists, because of its influence upon our Representatives in Congress. To sustain, to encourage them, in their noble stand in defence of the right of petition, and the freedom of debate, is your solemn duty. Thrust out as they are into the midst of this angry excitement, and contending for constitutional rights, at the peril of their lives, it would be generous in your body to throw around them the shield of its approval. To refuse so to do, when requested by the people, would be ignoble, unjust. Our

members need this; they ask it. In an interview with one of them\* during the last summer, he urged the importance of pouring in petitions to the Legislature, praying them to instruct their Senators, and request their Representatives, to act and vote for the abolition of slavery in the District. 'This,' said he, 'will invigorate us, and we shall feel that we stand on the terra firma of an approving public sentiment at home.' Sir, the people have brought their request to your halls. Will you be deaf to their prayer? Public sentiment is ripe for this measure. You are its organ. Our members of Congress have the right to expect, that you, in the name of the people, will give them the cheering word, 'ONWARD!' Let me again read from the letter of the venerable John Quincy Adams, before cited. Will his voice be disregarded in this Hall? "I feel much encouraged by your approbation, and that of others holding opinions the same as yours, to continue in the course which I have hitherto, as a member of the House of Representatives, pursued with regard to the right of Petition. I do not foresee that I shall alter that course, while I shall continue in the public service. How far it will be sanctioned, even by the majority of my own constituents, is yet to be seen." Sir:—it is *not* yet to be seen. It is seen;—written in the history of the past. The Old Colony desert her distinguished champion for defending her cherished principles? NEVER!

Says Mr. Adams further:—"The struggle in the House of Representatives, for and against the reception of Petitions for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia, is merely the *symptom* of a deep-seated disease, preying upon the vitals of this Union;—and that disease is Slavery. Now, if it were in the power of Congress, to bar the doors of the Capitol, till the elements shall be consumed with fervent heat, as inexorably against the cry of Justice, of Mercy, of human reason, and human feeling for the Emancipation of the hereditary slave, as Dante says the gates of Hell were closed against

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\* Hon. Nathaniel B. Borden.

*Hope*, still the disease would continue to prey upon the vitals of the Union ;—and that disease will prey till radically healed, or till it shall terminate in death.”

How like the prophecies of Jefferson! Dissolve the Union if we abolish slavery in the District? Sir, if slavery is not abolished, not only there, but throughout the country, this nation is abolished. In such a crisis, has Massachusetts any interests at stake? Has her Legislature any duties to discharge? The PEOPLE put to you these interrogatories. But to the letter. “The symptom of the disease is an inflexible determination to gag, and to hear nothing about it. The terror at the thought of hearing the truth, smothers debate, and strangles the right of Petition. \*\*\*\* I believe it is the opinion of all my colleagues, that my opinions in favor of the right of Petition, have been sufficiently manifested in the House ; and they have some doubts how far they will be sustained by the people of the Commonwealth.” Sir : the Commonwealth WILL sustain him ! What !—shall Massachusetts, the State which, in the days of her colonial weakness, shielded the hunted judges of Charles the First from the active vengeance of England, give up her own great citizen to the tender mercies of slavery? Shall she, who threw around the proscribed and outlawed Adams of the Revolution, a wall of republican hearts, shrink back from sustaining one, who, in his love of liberty and hatred of oppression, does no dishonor to his illustrious namesake?

Shall MASSACHUSETTS stand erect no longer,  
But stoop in chains upon her downward way,  
Thicker to gather on her limbs and stronger  
Day after day?

Oh no—methinks from all her wild green mountains—  
From valleys where her slumbering fathers lie—  
From her blue rivers and her welling fountains,  
And clear, cold sky !

From her rough coast and isles, which hungry Ocean  
Gnaws with his surges—from the fisher's skiff,  
With white sail swaying to the billow's motion,  
Round rock and cliff !

From the free fireside of her unbought farmer—  
From her free laborer at his loom and wheel ;  
From the brown smith-shop, where beneath the hammer  
Rings the red steel !

From each and all, if God hath not forsaken  
 Our State, and left us to an evil choice,  
 Loud as the summer thunder-bolt shall waken  
 A PEOPLE'S VOICE!

MASSACHUSETTS ALWAYS AN ANTI-SLAVERY STATE.

Mr. Chairman: Massachusetts should assume the position to which she is called by these memorialists, to sustain before the nation her ancient high character as an Anti-Slavery State. Let us recite her history.

Slavery in Massachusetts was never the creature of her laws. Her pilgrim founders never *created* it. It indeed *existed*, but only as a *nuisance*. It never clothed itself in the authority of her fundamental law, but stood only upon its own execrable foundation of Robbery and Usurpation. It never, thank Heaven, polluted the ermine of her judiciary. In the Massachusetts Colony, as early as 1641, "It is ordered by the Court and the authority thereof, that there shall never be any bond-slavery, villenage, or captivity among us, unless it be [such] lawful captives taken in war, as willingly sell themselves, or are sold to us; and such shall have the *liberties and Christian usage*, which the law of God, established in Israel concerning such persons, doth morally require."\* This law was not a dead letter. Chief Justice Parsons says, "If the master was guilty of a cruel or unreasonable castigation of his slave, he was liable to be punished for a breach of the peace, and I believe the slave was allowed to demand sureties of the peace, against a violent and barbarous master. Under these regulations, the treatment of slaves was in general mild and humane, and they suffered hardships not greater than hired servants."† Sir, these provisions cut up by the roots, the essentials of the system. Protection, such as the laws of Moses afforded, entirely destroys *absolute chattel slavery*. Still, it should be remembered, that even this system was merely *permitted*, and was never *sanctioned* by the laws of the Commonwealth.

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\* General laws and liberties of Massachusetts Bay, Chap. 12, § 2.

† Winchendon v. Hatfield, 4 Mass. Rep. 127.

‘In 1770, negroes [in Massachusetts] began to sue their masters for their freedom, and for payment of all services rendered after the age of 21. Many actions for that purpose were brought, between this time and the Revolution, all of which were successful.’\*

Yes, Sir, her courts of Justice were temples of refuge to the slave, even before her Bill of Rights, in 1780, signed the death-warrant of the system. The Bill of Rights! What is it? It pledges forever the moral and political power of the Commonwealth, on the side of freedom. Here are its sublime truths, before which slavery in Massachusetts fled away, never to return. ‘All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights; among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties—that of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property; in fine, that of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness.’ Thus, she annihilated slavery in her own borders, and proclaimed in the ear of the world, that the right to liberty is inalienable.

At another memorable epoch,—the war of the Revolution,—in defence of the same great principles, Massachusetts rushed earliest to the battle field. Not content with defending her own territory, she generously made common cause with her sister colonies. That her patriotism was co-extensive with the entire nation, is recorded in the blood of her sons, on the soil of every state from Maine to Georgia. And, Sir, the descendants of those who perished untimely at Boston and Bunker Hill, whose bones whitened the plains of Concord and Lexington, whose blood fattened the soil of Camden and Yorktown, now walk erect in their own Massachusetts, inhale the free spirit, and cherish the free principles of their sires, and will dishonor their memories, never. In their love of liberty, and hatred of oppression, the sons would equal the fathers. Like them, their principles they will yield only with their lives. But, unlike them, they will not do

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\* Report of a Committee of the House of Representatives of Mass., by Theodore Lyman, Jr. in 1822.

evil that good may come. In this moral contest for holy freedom, their only weapons are truth and love ; their trust, in the Prince of Peace.

On the ratification of the U. S. Constitution, this state would not tolerate the idea, that by that act, she sanctioned the making merchandise of men. From the published debates of the Convention which ratified the Constitution, we may boldly affirm, that, had the Statesmen of that day so believed, they would never have approved that instrument \*

In the great Missouri contest, when slavery struggled ferociously for the mastery, this Commonwealth stood firmly erect on its free constitution ; and, unshaken by the threats of the South, or the treachery of the North, maintained its integrity.†

#### SOUTHERN AGGRESSION. HOW MET.

But her recent history ;—would that it had never been written. In the conflict of slavery with freedom, which has shaken this nation for the last two years, where has been the moral power of Massachusetts ?—Sir, the friends of liberty have maintained their principles, even in this Commonwealth, at the hazard of their lives. The public press has been eager to proscribe them :—popular meetings have been convened to denounce them ; and mobs have been commissioned to execute upon them, the decreed vengeance of a corrupt public sentiment. Their peaceable

\* See Elliott's Debates.

† The following are the proceedings of the Massachusetts Legislature, on the Missouri question. On the 23d of February, 1820, the following joint resolutions were passed, viz :—

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Legislature, it is the duty of the people and government of the United States, by all constitutional means, to prevent the extension of so great a moral and political evil as Slavery ; that Congress possess the Constitutional power to prohibit the further introduction of Slavery into the territory of the United States, not within the original limits of said States, and to make such prohibition a condition of the admission of any new State into the Union.

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Legislature, it is the duty of Congress to exercise this power on the admission of all new States beyond the limits of the original territory of the United States." [Note to 2d Edition.]



assemblages have been forcibly broken up,—gags have been thrust into their mouths,—a price has been set upon their heads. I see before me in this Hall, a citizen of Massachusetts, who has been dragged like a felon through the streets of your city, and for whose life a sovereign state\* has, by a deliberate act of its Legislature, offered a reward of five thousand dollars! What was his crime? He was guilty of echoing the principles of John Adams and Elbridge Gerry; of proclaiming the beautiful and Christ-like sentiment, ‘My country is the world—my countrymen are all mankind.’† It is not incendiary, even in this Hall, to pronounce the name of William Lloyd Garrison. Where has been the response of Massachusetts to these unparalleled outrages? However she may disregard the claims of her citizen to protection, posterity will do justice to his memory; and in coming years the tears of an enfranchised race shall water his grave. What was the answer given at the last session of your legislature, to the insulting demands of Georgia, Virginia, and South Carolina, with which the Governor loaded yonder table? A Report admitting the justice of those demands; and, in the language of the Chief Magistrate of Pennsylvania, ‘a base bowing of the knee to the dark spirit of slavery!’ Sir, that Report libelled the people of Massachusetts, and they have buried it beyond the reach of resurrection.

During the past winter, the petitioners for the abolition of slavery in the District, have been stigmatized on the floor of Congress as ‘*the white slaves of the North.*’ Sir, who are these petitioners? The president of your Senate, the chaplain of your House, members of both branches of your Legislature, William Ellery Channing, and John Pierpont, with a host of worthy compeers, are of the number. The character of the entire body of these petitioners, embracing more than thirty thousand of the inhabitants of this Commonwealth, not less than the object of their petitions, should shield them from insult. At least, their

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\* Georgia.

† Motto of the Liberator.

own Legislature should sternly rebuke the assassins of their reputation.

In defence, then, of her own character, to preserve her own consistency, and maintain her influence among her sister states, Massachusetts should lead rather than follow, in this cause. Vermont, true to her principles, has already uttered through her Legislature, a manly rebuke of Southern arrogance.\* The Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, at the last session of the Pennsylvania Legislature, presented a report in regard to slavery in the District, worthy the times of Rush and Franklin. And the Governor of that state uttered sentiments in his late message, which might fitly be echoed by the Chief Magistrate even of this Commonwealth.†

\* At her late session, Vermont, by a nearly unanimous vote, passed the following resolutions :—

*Resolved*, By the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, that neither Congress nor the State Governments have any constitutional right to abridge the free expression of opinions or the transmission of them through the medium of the public mails.

*Resolved*, That Congress do possess the power to abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia.

*Resolved*, That his Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit a copy of the foregoing resolutions to the executives of each of the States, and to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress." [Note to 2d Edition.]

† I cannot forbear to give an extract, brief and imperfect as it must be, from this exalted message.

Says Gov. Ritner—"In rapid and startling succession, all the principles of Pennsylvania policy, all the objects of State pride, have been attacked; nor have there been wanting Pennsylvanians to aid in their prostration."

[After specifying several topics in proof of his assertion, he adds.] "And last, but worst of all, came the base bowing of the knee to the dark spirit of slavery.

For the preservation of this last and most cherished article of our national political creed, the sacrifice of which has not yet been completed, it is our duty to make all possible effort."

[After enlarging upon the principles, policy, and history of Pennsylvania, in regard to domestic slavery at home, in the District of Columbia, and on the admission of new States, he concludes thus :]

"These tenets, then, viz. opposition to slavery at home, which, by the blessing of Providence, has been rendered effectual; opposition to the admission into the Union of new slave-holding states; and opposition to slavery in the District of Columbia, the very hearth and domestic abode of the national honor—have ever been, and are the cherished doctrines of our state. Let us, fellow-citizens, stand by and maintain them unshrinkingly and fearlessly. While we admit and scrupulously respect the constitutional

## IT IS NOT TOO LATE.

It has been urged as an objection to action on this subject at the present session of the Legislature, that it is so late, Congress being on the eve of adjourning, it will accomplish no good.

Sir, it is never too late to do right. The memorialists, however, do not expect that the expression of sentiment they now ask of your honorable body, will immediately accomplish the ultimate object they seek—the abolition of slavery in the District:—but that such an expression will constitute one in a train of influences, which, in due time, will lead to that result. Reforms move slowly—and only, because reforming influences are dilatory in applying the propelling power. By prompt, uncompromising, lofty action, at this crisis, the Legislature might revolutionize the public sentiment of New England, and bring the entire North to reflection. The time is rapidly approaching, when this cause will not need your aid. The world knows that slavery must die. Some will peril their all for its destruction. Others will save their strength that they may shout over its downfall. Generosity will aid a righteous cause, though struggling against the current of popular proscription: calculating expediency floats in its wake, when it is borne on by the resistless wave of public favor. The tide of intelligent sympathy for the bondman, is rapidly increasing. Patriots, and Christians, will contribute to swell it.—Popularity-hunters, and Worshippers of Mammon, will wait to take it at its flood. It shall sweep

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rights of other states, on this momentous subject, let us not, either by fear or interest, be driven from aught of that spirit of independence and veneration for freedom, which has ever characterized our beloved commonwealth.

Above all, let us never yield up the right of the free discussion of any evil which may arise in the land or any part of it; convinced that the moment we do so, the bond of union is broken. For, the Union being a voluntary compact to continue together for certain specified purposes, the instant one portion of it succeeds in imposing terms and dictating conditions upon another, not found in the contract, the relation between them changes, and that which was union, becomes subjection."

Nobly spoken! How it contrasts with the "the base bowing of the knee" by the Governors of many other of the free states of the Union! [Note to 2d Edition.]

them away! Sooner or later, this question must be met, and determined *here*. The gentleman who preceded me (Mr. Hillard) uttered the bold sentiment, that 'through Congress, or over Congress, this question will go.' I respond to it, and add, that through the Legislature, or over the Legislature, this question will go. Systematic and determined efforts, by denunciation, by threats, and by lawless violence, unparalleled in our history, have been and are still made, to suppress inquiry, and paralyze action, on the subject of slavery. While the bottom of society has furnished abundant materials for this work, wealth, respectability, talents, and professed piety, have been consecrated to its performance:—and even those high in authority, have turned aside from their official duties, to aid in its accomplishment. But, it is in vain. I know the men who are engaged in this cause. Impelled to action by their duty to God, threats will not deter them, nor violence drive them, from the unceasing and thorough discussion of the rights of man. Stop discussion,—put out the lights of investigation, in the nineteenth century, in America, concerning slavery? Sooner bind the ocean with a cord, or stop the sun in his course! Will the spirit of free inquiry, which could not be hushed to slumber in the midnight of the dark ages, be frightened to sleep in the noon day of eighteen hundred and thirty-seven, amid the exciting enterprises of this era of investigation, when the mightiest intellects of the age have consecrated themselves to the work of agitation? When the general diffusion of knowledge is imparting fresh vigor to thought and action, and the liberal doctrines of the Cross are emancipating the world, can tyrants, whether democrats or monarchists, hope to chain thought, and fetter the tongue, and lock the ear? While, among the crowned heads and mitred brows, the monarchies and hierarchies of Europe, the spirit of reform is upheaving the foundations, and exposing the corruptions of centuries, is America the spot where freedom of speech and of the press shall be struck dumb? Shall the soil which drank the blood of the martyrs to liberty and the rights of conscience, bear up the altars on which

free discussion, and the right of petition, shall be sacrificed? Sooner shall the earth open, and swallow them. What! Shall the Divine Right of Kings, and the Supremacy of the Pope, be openly discarded in their own dominions, while the sons of the Pilgrims are forbidden, in New England, to declare the equality of man, and the inalienability of human rights? Will *they* crush every rising thought, suppress every manly sentiment, discard every noble principle, stifle every generous emotion, quench every holy sympathy, and betray every sacred trust, that corrupt rulers, in Church and State, may establish the foundations of their power on the necks and hearts of millions of their fellow countrymen? As soon will they forswear their manhood, and apostatize from God. No, undeterred by official proscription or private denunciation, by prosecutions at common law or persecutions without law, by legislative enactments or ecclesiastical anathemas, the friends of the slave, guided by the wisdom, cheered by the favor, and protected by the power of God, will prosecute their work. And that man, or that party, which shall attempt to arrest this cause in its onward march, will be borne down by the advancing host.

Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the Committee— You have heard the prayer of the memorialists. Shall it be granted?—They ask it, not to subserve party purposes or sectarian objects; not for themselves, but for their country,—nor for their country only, but for the world; not for the present age merely, but for all coming time. They ask it in the name of Humanity, outraged and bleeding: of Liberty, sacrificed on her own altars; of Religion, wrested to sanction odious oppression; and, above all, in the name of Jehovah, insulted in the imbruting of His own image.

[Mr. Stanton concluded by expressing his sincere thanks to the Committee for their courtesy and attention, during the protracted remarks which he had felt it his duty to offer.]

[*Note by the Publisher.*—It may not be improper to say, that the foregoing ‘Remarks’ are not identical with the speech delivered. It was delivered extemporaneously, from very brief notes,—a mere skeleton of the principal heads. The report of it was hastily drawn up. It contains the substance of the *arguments* employed, with the *language*, so far as it was possible to recollect it.

In justice to the *subject*, it may be said, that the speech was delivered on short notice, and with very hasty preparation;—that other topics, arguments, and facts, of equal importance with those adduced, were prepared, and would have been presented, had not the ill health of the speaker, and the length of time occupied by him, (five hours,) prevented. These topics, &c., are not added in the report, because it is thought best to give what *was* said, rather than what *might*, or was *intended* to have been said.]

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## APPENDIX

### TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE following Preamble and Resolutions were reported by the Committee:—

“Whereas, the House of Representatives of the United States, in the month of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, did adopt a resolution, whereby it was ordered that all petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions, or papers, relating in any way, or to any extent whatever, to the subject of slavery, or the abolition of slavery, without being either printed or referred, should be laid upon the table, and that no further action whatever should be had thereon; and whereas such a disposition of petitions, then or thereafter to be received, is a virtual denial of the right itself; and whereas, by the resolution aforesaid, which is adopted as a standing rule of the present House of Representatives, the petitions of a large number of the people of this Commonwealth, praying for the removal of a great social, moral, and political evil, have been slighted and condemned: therefore,

“Resolved, That the resolution above named is an assumption of power and authority at variance with the spirit and intent of the Constitution of the United States, and injurious to the cause of freedom and free institutions; that it does violence to the inherent, absolute, and inalienable rights of man; and that it tends essentially to impair those fundamental principles of natural justice and natural law, which are antecedent to any written constitutions of government, independent of them all, and essential to the security of freedom in a State.

“Resolved, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress, in maintaining and advocating the full right of petition, have entitled themselves to the cordial approbation of the people of this Commonwealth.

“Resolved, That Congress, having exclusive legislation in the District of Columbia, possess the right to abolish slavery in said District, and that its exercise should only be restrained by a regard to the public good.”

After a spirited debate, in which the resolutions were supported by Messrs. Lunt, of Danvers ; Park and Blake, of Boston ; Mansur, of Lowell ; and Cobb, of Malden ; and opposed by Mr. Folsom, of Hingham, they were adopted, yeas 378, nays 16.

In the *Senate*, the last resolution was struck out, and the following inserted instead of it, yeas 35, nays 0 :—

*“Resolved, That Congress, having exclusive legislation in the District of Columbia, possesses the right to abolish slavery and the slave trade therein ; and that the early exercise of such right is demanded by the enlightened sentiment of the civilized world, by the principles of the Revolution, and by humanity.”*

The following resolution was *added* by the Senate, yeas 33, nays 1 :—

*“Resolved, That, slavery being an admitted moral and political evil, whose continuance, wherever it exists, is vindicated mainly on the ground of necessity, it should be circumscribed within the limits of the States where it has been already established ; and that no new State should hereafter be admitted into the Union, whose constitution of government shall sanction or permit the existence of domestic slavery.”*

On the *final passage* of the resolutions in the Senate, as amended, the vote was as follows :—

On the first resolution, yeas 32, nays 1 ;

On the second resolution, yeas 32, nays 1 ;

On the third resolution, yeas 31, nays 2 ;

On the fourth resolution, yeas 29, nays 4.

The resolutions were ably supported in the Senate, by Messrs. Allen, Child, and Hudson, of Worcester ; Whitmarsh, of Bristol ; Lawrence, of Hampshire ; Parker, of Middlesex ; and Fairbanks, of Suffolk ;—and were opposed *entire*, by Mr. Cushing of Norfolk ; and *in part*, by Messrs. French, of Norfolk, and Quincy, of Suffolk.

The resolutions, *as amended*, were sent to the House, and were referred to the Committee which originally reported them. Mr. Lee, Chairman of the Committee, reported that the House *non-concur* with the Senate, and gave as the reason for so doing, that the resolutions, as originally adopted by the House, *would better advance the cause of Abolition in the Commonwealth*, during the coming year, than as amended by the Senate. The amendments of the Senate were ably advocated by Mr. Huntington, of Northampton. The House then *refused to concur* with the Senate, by the following vote :—

On the first amended resolution, ayes 230, noes 79 ;

On the added resolution, ayes 219, noes 103.

*The House refused to order the yeas and nays.* The Senate then *receded* ;—and so, the Preamble and Resolutions which first passed the House, now stand as the Resolutions of the Legislature. Well done, Massachusetts !

*Extract from a Speech of Hon. Daniel Webster, at New York, March 15, 1837.*

"On the general question of Slavery, a great portion of the community is already strongly excited. The subject has not only attracted attention as a question of politics, but it has struck a far deeper-toned chord. It has arrested the religious feeling of the country; it has taken strong hold on the consciences of men. He is a rash man, indeed, and little conversant with human nature, and especially has he a very erroneous estimate of the character of the people of this country, who supposes that a feeling of this kind is to be trifled with, or despised. It will assuredly cause itself to be respected. It may be reasoned with, it may be made willing, I believe it is entirely willing, to fulfil all existing engagements, and all existing duties, to uphold and defend the Constitution, as it is established, with whatever regrets, about some provisions, which it does actually contain. But to coerce it into silence; to endeavor to restrain its free expression, to seek to compress and confine it, warm as it is, and more heated as such endeavors would inevitably render it;—should all this be attempted, I know nothing, even in the Constitution, or in the Union itself, which would not be endangered by the explosion which might follow."

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*Extract of a Letter from Hon. John Quincy Adams, to the Inhabitants of the Twelfth Congressional District of Massachusetts, dated Washington, 20th March, 1837.*

"Slavery has already had too deep and too baleful an influence upon the affairs and upon the history of this Union. It can never operate but as a slow poison to the morals of any community infected with it. Ours is infected with it to the vitals. We are told that the national government has no right to interfere with the institution of domestic slavery in the states, in any manner. What right, then, has domestic slavery to interfere, in any manner, with the national government? What right has slavery to interfere, in the free states, with the dearest institutions of their freedom?—with the right of habeas corpus?—with the right of trial by jury?—with the freedom of the press?—with the freedom of speech?—with the sacred privacy of correspondence by the mail? What right has slavery to interfere with the laws of other nations productive of freedom? what right to interfere with the laws of Bermuda?—of the Bahama Islands?—of Great Britain? What right has she to cast her living chattels upon a soil which has banished her forever, and then come whining to the national government, that the touch of the soil of liberty has quickened her chattels into freemen; and requiring of the national government to claim indemnity for her emancipated chattels? Nay more, and worse—what right has slavery to chide the national government for not demanding her indemnity in a tone sufficiently peremptory?—for not threatening Great Britain with WAR, if she lingers longer to pay the price of sinews bought and sold?

"If the national government has no right to interfere with the institution of domestic slavery in the states, in any manner, what right has domestic slavery to issue from her consecrated boundaries, and call on the national government for protection, for defence, for vindication of her pretended and polluted rights? What right has she to show her face upon the ocean, where the laws of the nation have pronounced her detested traffic PIRACY?



'The independence' of sovereign states from all foreign interference with their municipal institutions, is reciprocal, or it is nothing. If you have no right to interfere with the slavery of South Carolina, the slavery of South Carolina has no right to interfere with your freedom.

"If the national government has no right to interfere with the institution of domestic slavery in any of the states, what right has that same government to hang on your neck the millstone of Texian slavery?—reinstated slavery, in a land where once that curse of God had been extinguished?—slavery restored by fraud and treachery, and the imposture of a painted harlot usurping the name of Freedom? Is the annexation of Texas, with her execrable load of *eternal* slavery, to the Union—is that one of the engagements implied in Mr. Van Buren's pledge, never to sign a bill for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia? If the pledge of the inaugural address means any thing more than soothing sound, it means that the maintenance and perpetuation of slavery in this Union shall be the cardinal point, the polar star, of Mr. Van Buren's administration. And with that pledge, can you doubt that the manacles of Texian slavery will be fastened upon your hands, and the fetters of Texian slavery upon your feet? Children of Carver, and Bradford, and Winslow, and Alden!—the pen drops from my hand!"

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✍ Will be published, in a few days, by ISAAC KNAPP, at No. 25 Cornhill, Boston, in a cheap form, for general circulation, the series of Letters, by J. Q. ADAMS, addressed to the inhabitants of the Twelfth Congressional District of Massachusetts.

*Boston, May 1, 1837.*

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✍ A juvenile paper, called the "YOUTH'S CABINET," has just been commenced at No. 25 Cornhill. N. SOUTHARD, Editor. It is devoted to "Liberty, Peace, Temperance, Purity, Truth." Price, \$1.00 per annum, in advance. Agents are allowed 20 per cent. for new subscribers, provided they forward the money, free of expense, in advance.

*Boston, May 1, 1837.*